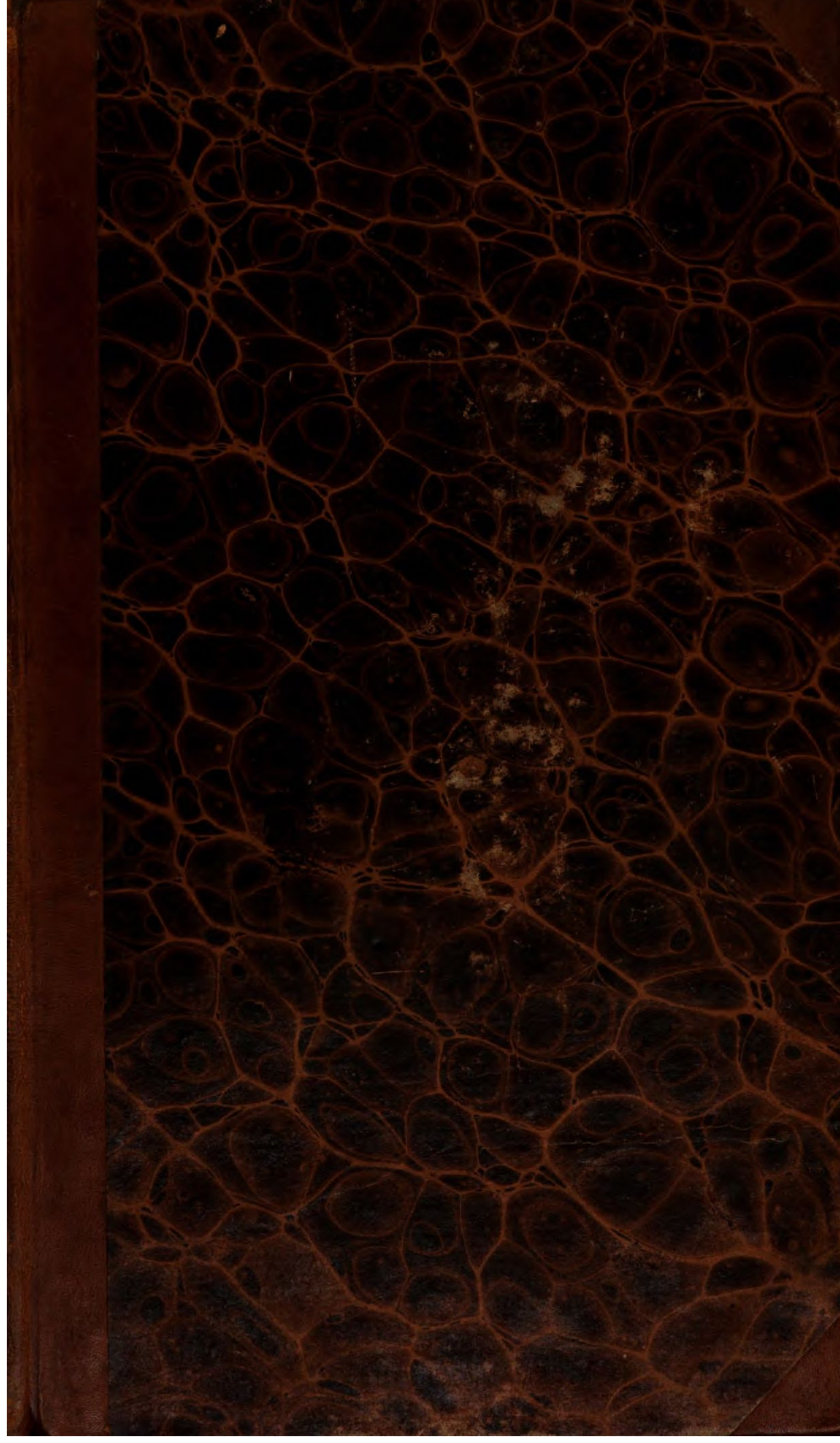
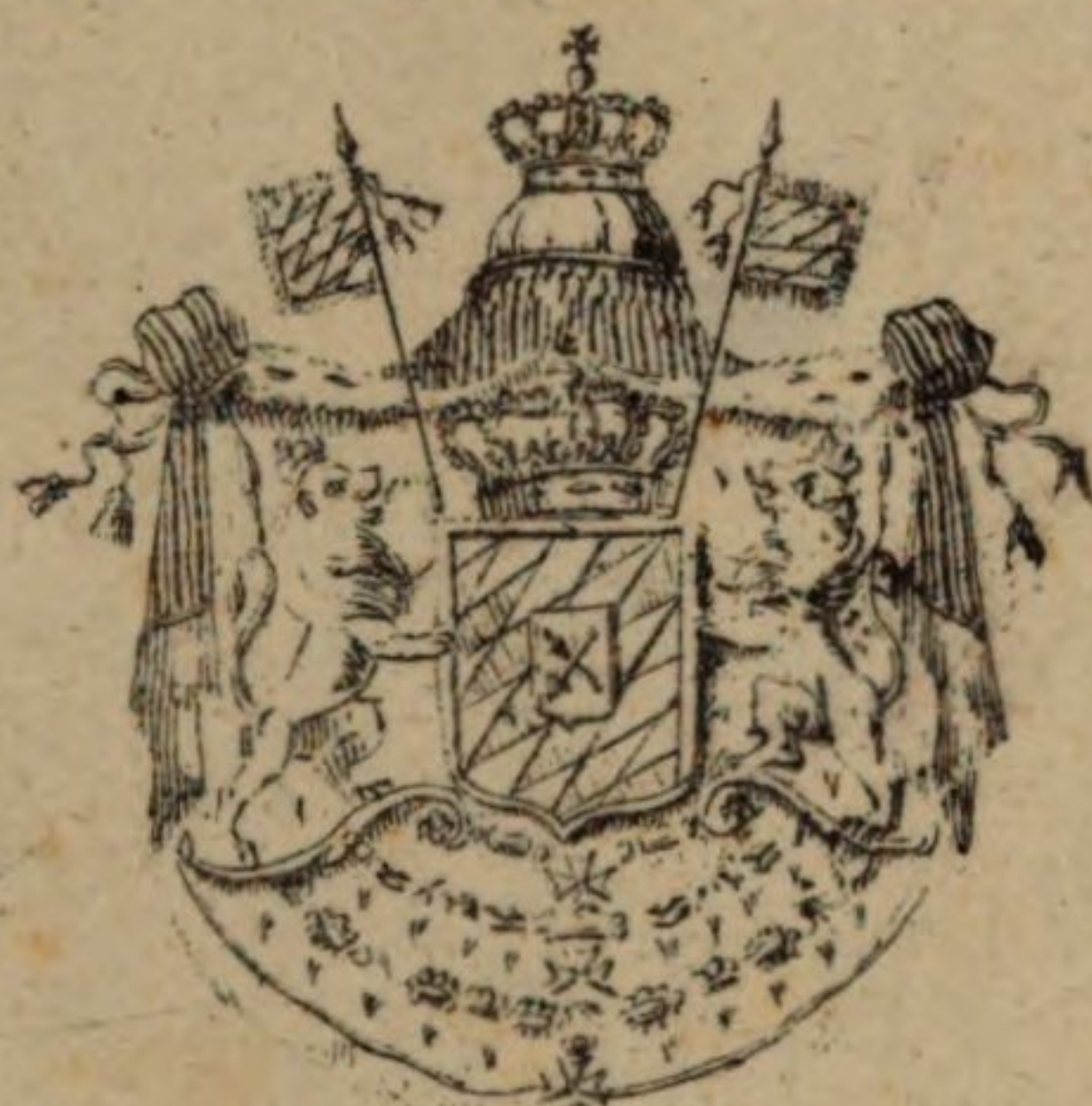




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TALES

AND

ESSAYS

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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PARIS:

PUBLISHED BY A. AND W. GALIGNANI.

AT THE ENGLISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN, GERMAN, AND SPANISH
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INTRODUCTION.

LETTER

FROM SIR WALTER SCOTT, TO SIR ADAM FERGU-
SON, DESCRIPTIVE OF A PICTURE PAINTED AT
ABBOTSFORD, BY DAVID WILKIE, ESQ. R. A. AND
EXHIBITED AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY, IN 1818.

MY DEAR ADAM,—the picture you mention has something in it of rather a domestic character, as the personages are represented in a sort of masquerade, such being the pleasure of the accomplished painter. Nevertheless, if you, the proprietor, incline to have it engraved, I do not see that I am entitled to make any objection.

But Mr ——— mentions, besides, a desire to have anecdotes of my private and domestic life, or, as he expresses himself, a portrait of the author in his night-gown and slippers; and this from you, who, I dare say, could furnish some anecdotes of our younger days, which

might now seem ludicrous enough. Even as to my night-gown and slippers, I believe the time has been when the articles of my wardrobe were as familiar to your memory as Poins's to Prince Henry; but that period has been for some years past, and I cannot think it would be interesting to the public to learn that I have changed my old robe-de-chambre for a handsome douillette, when I was last at Paris.

The truth is, that a man of an ordinary sense cannot be supposed delighted with the species of gossip, which, in the dearth of other news, recurs to such a quiet individual as myself; and, though like a well behaved lion of twenty years' standing, I am not inclined to vex myself about what I cannot help, I will not, in any case in which I can prevent it, be accessory to these follies. There is no man known at all in literature who may not have more to tell of his private life than I have: I have surmounted no difficulties either of birth or education, nor have I been favoured by any particular advantages; and my life has been as void of incidents of importance as that of the "Weary Knife-grinder."

Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, Sir.

The follies of youth ought long since to have passed away, and if the prejudices and

absurdities of age have come in their place, I will keep them as Beau Tibbs did his prospect, for the amusement of my domestic friends. A mere enumeration of the persons in sketch, is all which I can possibly permit to be published respecting myself and my family; and, as must be the lot of humanity when we look back seven or eight years, even what follows cannot be drawn up without some very painful recollections.

The idea which our inimitable Wilkie adopted was to represent our family group in the garb of south-country peasants, supposed to be concerting a merry-making, for which some of the preparations are seen. The place is the terrace near Kayside, commanding an extensive view towards the Eildon-hills. 1. The sitting figure, in the dress of a miller, I believe, represents Sir Walter Scott, author of a few scores of volumes, and proprietor of Abbotsford, in the county of Roxburgh. 2. In front, and representing, we may suppose, a country wag, somewhat addicted to poaching, stands Sir Adam Ferguson, Knight, Keeper of the Regalia of Scotland. 3. In the back-ground, is a very handsome old man, upwards of eighty-four years old, at the time, painted in his own character of a shepherd. He also belonged to the numerous clan of Scott. He used to claim credit for three things unusual among the

southland shepherds: first, that he had never been *fou* in the course of his life; secondly, that he never had struck a man in anger; thirdly, that, though entrusted with the management of large sales of stock, he had never lost a penny for his master by a bad debt. He died soon afterwards at Abbotsford. 4-5-6. Of the three female figures, the elder is the late regretted mother of the family represented. 5. The young person most forward in the group, is Miss Sophia Charlotte Scott, now Mrs John Gibson Lockhart, and, 6. her younger sister, Miss Ann Scott. Both are represented as ewe-milkers, with their *leglins*, or milk-pails. 7. On the left hand of the shepherd, the young man holding a fowling-piece, is the elder son of Sir Walter, now captain in the king's hussars. 8. The boy is the youngest of the family, Charles Scott, now of Brazen-Nose College, Oxford. The two dogs were distinguished favourites of the family; the large one was a stag-hound, of the old highland breed, called Maida, and one of the handsomest dogs that could be found; it was a present to me from the chief of Glengary, and was highly valued, both on account of his beauty, his fidelity, and the great rarity of the breed. The other is a little highland terrier called *Ourisk* (Goblin), of a particular kind, bred in Kintail. It was a present from the Honourable Mrs

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Stuart Mackenzie, and is a valuable specimen of a race which is now scarce. Maida, like Bran, Luath, and other dogs of distinction, slumbers «beneath his stone,» distinguished by an epitaph, which, to the honour of Scottish scholarship be it spoken, has only one false quantity in two lines.

Maida marmorea sub imagine.—Maida,
Ad januam domini sit tibi terra levis.

Ourisk still survives, but, like other personages in the picture, with talents and temper rather the worse for wear. She has become what Dr Ratty, the quaker, records himself in his journal as having sometimes been, sinfully dogged and snappish.

If it should suit Mr ——'s purpose to adopt the above illustrations, he is heartily welcome to them; but I make it my especial bargain that nothing more is said upon such a meagre subject.

It strikes me, however, that there is a story about old Thomas Scott, the shepherd, which is characteristic, and which I will make your friend welcome to. Tom was, as a trusted servant, and as a rich fellow in his line, a person of considerable importance among his class in the neighbourhood, and used to stickle a good deal to keep his place in public opinion.

Now, he suffered, in his own idea at least, from the consequence assumed by a country neighbour, who, though neither so well reputed for wealth or sagacity as Thomas Scott, had yet an advantage over him, from having seen the old King, and used to take precedence upon all occasions when they chanced to meet. Thomas suffered under this superiority. But after this sketch was finished, and exhibited in London, the newspapers made it known that his present Majesty had condescended to take some notice of it. Delighted with the circumstance, Thomas Scott set out on a most oppressively hot day, to walk five miles to Bowden, where his rival resided. He had no sooner entered the cottage than he called out in his broad forest dialect: « Andro', man, did ye anes sey (see) the King? »—« In troth, did I, Tam, » answered Andro'; « sit down and I'll tell ye a' about it:—ye sey, I was at Lonon, in a place they ca' the park, that is, no like a hained hog-fence, or like the four-nooked parks in this country—» « Hout awa, » said Thomas, « I have heard a' that before: I only came ower the know now to tell you, that if you have seen the King, the King has seen *mey* » (me). And so he returned with a jocund heart, assuring his friends « it had done him muckle gude to settle accounts with Andro' ».

Jocose hæc,—as the old Laird of Restalrig

writes to the Earl of Gowrie—farewell, my old, tried, and dear friend of forty long years. Our enjoyments must now be of a character less vivid than those we have shared together.

But still at our lot it were vain to repine,
Youth cannot return, or the days of lang syne.

Your's affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

ABBOTSFORD, 2d August, 1827.

ABBOTSFORD.

[We have much pleasure in presenting to our readers a description of the residence of Sir Walter Scott, from the private letter of a distinguished American. The fame of the illustrious proprietor has flown far and wide; and his name has become a passport to his countrymen in every quarter of the globe where the glory of genius is acknowledged. The admiration which his numerous works have excited, naturally creates a wish to know something more of one who has delighted us all so much—to see the place where he gives himself up to meditation—the walks in which he muses, and the study in which he conceives and pours forth his magical productions. The pen of our friend has recorded his impressions with great vividness and graphic vigour. Ed.]

I HAVE been exceedingly unfortunate as to one of the chief objects of this northern expedi-

tion; in a word, it has been my luck to select for my visit to Scotland the only month in which, for some years past, Sir Walter has been out of it. My good friend R—— had told me that by the 12th or 13th he was sure to be on the banks of the Tweed, and, amply provided with letters of introduction, I quitted the mail-coach at Selkirk on the 15th, without the slightest doubt that I was within an hour's ride of the great Minstrel, as well as of his castle. The people at the inn, too, confirmed me in my belief. "The Sheriff," so they called him, was, they said, sure to be at home, for "the session was up," and he never was known to linger amidst the dust of Edinburgh when his professional duties permitted him to be in the country. On accordingly I drove, in high hope; and ere long the towers of Abbotsford were pointed out to me, amidst a beautiful wood chiefly of young oak and birch, and at no great distance from the river. But, to cut the story short, I found the outer gates barred and bolted; there was nothing, after we knocked and rang for some minutes, but a woful howling of dogs from the interior; and at last a rough-looking countryman issuing, with a stag-hound at his heels and an axe on his shoulder, from a side postern, informed me, in a dialect not over intelligible, that Sir Walter and his family had gone on a tour to Ireland, and were not expected back again

for some weeks. This was grievous enough: but what remedy? I asked to see the house and gardens, and was told I might do so any other day I pleased, but that on this particular day there was a fair in the neighbourhood, and the showkeepers had quitted their post to partake of its festivities. Upon a little reflection, I resolved to go on to "fair Melrose," and return to Abbotsford next morning. I was fortunate enough to scrape acquaintance, ere this, with Mr ***** of ***** , who politely offered to act as my cicerone, and I believe, in the absence of the Poet's own household, there was no one better able to perform those functions. I breakfasted with him, and he conducted me once more to the huge baronial gates, which I no longer found reluctant to turn on their hinges. He took me all over the house and its environs, and I spent a delightful evening afterwards under his own hospitable roof, which is on the other side of the Tweed.

Some fifteen or sixteen years ago, he tells me, there was not a more unlovely spot, in this part of the world, than that on which Abbotsford now exhibits all its quaint architecture and beautiful accompaniment of garden and woodland. A mean farm-house stood on part of the site of the present edifice; a "kale yard" bloomed where the stately embattled court yard now spreads itself; and for many thousand acres of flourishing planta-

tions, half of which have all the appearance of being twice as old as they really are, there was but a single long straggling stripe of unthriving firs. The river, however, must needs remain *in statu quo*: and I will not believe that any place so near those clearest and sweetest of all waters, could ever have been quite destitute of charms. The scene, however, was no doubt wild enough,—a naked moor—a few little turnip fields painfully reclaimed from it—a Scotch cottage—a Scotch farm yard, and some Scots firs. It is difficult to imagine a more complete contrast to the Abbotsford of 1825.

Sir W. is, as you have no doubt heard, a most zealous agriculturist, and arboriculturist especially; and he is allowed to have done things with this estate, since it came into his possession, which would have been reckoned wonders, even if they had occupied the whole of a clever and skilful man's attention, during more years than have elapsed since he began to write himself Laird of Abbotsford. He has some excellent arable land on the banks of the Tweed, and towards the little town of Melrose, which lies some three miles from the mansion; but the bulk of the property is hilly country, with deep narrow dells interlacing it. Of this he has planted fully one half, and it is admitted on all hands, that his rising forest has been laid out, arranged,

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and managed with consummate taste, care, and success. So much so, that the general appearance of Tweedside, for some miles, is already quite altered and improved by the graceful ranges of his woodland; and that the produce of these plantations must, in the course of twenty or thirty years more, add immensely to the yearly rental of the estate. In the meantime, the shelter afforded by the woods to the sheep walks reserved amidst them, has prodigiously improved the pasturage, and half the surface yields already double the rent the whole was ever thought capable of affording, while in the old unprotected condition. All through those woods there are broad riding-ways, kept in capital order, and conducted in such excellent taste, that we might wander for weeks amidst their windings without exhausting the beauties of the Poet's lounge. There are scores of charming waterfalls in the ravines, and near every one of them you find benches or bowers at the most picturesque points of view. There are two or three small mountain lakes included in the domain—one of them not so small neither—being, I should suppose, nearly a mile in circumference; and of these also every advantage has been taken. On the whole, it is already a very beautiful scene; and when the trees have gained their proper dignity of elevation, it must be a very grand one. Amidst these

woods, Mr ***** tells me, the proprietor, when at home, usually spends many hours daily, either on his poney, or on foot, with axe and pruning knife in hand. Here is his *study*: he, it seems, like Jacques, is never at a loss to find «books in trees.»

The Muse nae poet ever fand her
Till by himsel' he learn'd to wander
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
An' no think lang,—

as Burns says; and one of his *burns*, by the by, is Huntley Burn, where Thomas of Erceldoune met the Queen of Faëry. The rencontre, according to the old Rhymer himself, occurred beside «The Eildon Tree.» That landmark has long since disappeared, but most of Sir Walter's walks have the Eildon Hills, in some one or other of their innumerable aspects, for background. But I am keeping you too long away from «The Rooftree of Monkbarns,» which is situated on the brink of the last of a series of irregular hills, descending from the elevation of the Eildons, stepwise, to the Tweed. On all sides, except towards the river, the house connects itself with the gardens (according to the old fashion now generally condemned), so that there is no want of air and space about the habitation. The building is such a one, I dare say, as nobody but he would ever have dreamed of erecting; or, if he had, es-

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caped being quizzed for his pains. Yet it is eminently imposing in its general effect; and in most of the details, not only full of historical interest, but of beauty also. It is no doubt a thing of shreds and patches, but they have been combined by a masterly hand; and if there be some whimsicalities, that in an ordinary case might have called up a smile, who is likely now or hereafter to contemplate such a monument of such a man's peculiar tastes and fancies, without feelings of a far different order? Borrowing outlines and ornaments from every part of Scotland, a gateway from Linlithgow, a roof from Roslin, a chimneypiece from Melrose, a postern from the « Heart of Midlothian,» etc. etc. etc. it is totally unlike any other building in the kingdom, as a whole; and that whole is, I have said, a beautiful and a noble whole—almost enough so to make me suspect that, if Sir Walter had been bred an architect, he might have done as much in that way as he has *de facto*, in the woodman's craft, or (which they swear he is less vain of) the novelist's.

By the principal approach you come very suddenly on the edifice—as the French would say, « Vous tombez sur le château;» but this evil, if evil it be, was unavoidable, in consequence of the vicinity of a public road which cuts off the *château* and its *plaisance* from the main body of park and wood, making it a

matter of necessity, that what is called, in the improvementmen's slang, "the avenue proper," should be short. It is but slightly curved, and you find yourself, a very few minutes after turning from the road, at the great gate already mentioned. This is a lofty arch rising out of an embattled wall of considerable height; and the *jougs*, as they are styled, those well known emblems of feudal authority, hang rusty at the side: this pair being, *dit on*, relics from that great citadel of the old Douglasses, Thrieve Castle, in Galloway. On entering, you find yourself within an enclosure of perhaps half an acre or better, two sides thereof being protected by the high wall above mentioned, all along which, inside, a trellised walk extends itself—broad, cool, and dark overhead with roses and honeysuckles. The third side, to the east, shows a screen of open arches of Gothic stone work, filled between with a net work of iron, not visible until you come close to it, and affording therefore delightful glimpses of the gardens, which spread upwards with many architectural ornaments of turret, porch, urn, vase, and what not, after a fashion that would make the heart of old Price of the Picturesque to leap within him: this screen is a feature of equal novelty and grace, and if ever the old school of gardening come into vogue again, will find abundance of imitators. It abutts on the eastern extremity of the house, which runs

along the whole of the northern side (and a small part of the western) of the great enclosure. And, by the way, nothing can be more delightful than the whole effect of the said enclosure, in the still and solitary state in which I chanced to see it. There is room for a piece of the most *elaborate* turf within it, and rosaries of all manner of shapes and sizes gradually connect this green pavement with the roof of the trellis walk, a verdant cloister, over which appears the grey wall with its little turrets; and over that again, climb oak, elm, birch, and hazel, up a steep bank—so steep that the trees, young as they are, give already all the grand effect of a sweeping amphitheatre of wood. The background on that side is wholly forest; on the east, garden loses itself in forest by degrees; on the west, there is wood on wood also, but with glimpses of the Tweed between; and in the distance (some half a dozen miles off) a complete *sierra*, the ridge of the mountain between Tweed and Yarrow, to wit—its highest peak being that of Newark hill, at the bottom of which the old castle, where «the latest Minstrel sang,» still exhibits some noble ruins.

Not being skilled in the technical tongue of the architects, I beg leave to decline describing the structure of the house, further than merely to say, that it is more than one hundred and fifty feet long in front, as I paced it; was built

at two different onsets; has a tall tower at either end, the one not the least like the other; presents sundry *crowfooted*, alias zigzagged, gables to the eye; a myriad of indentations and parapets and machicolated eaves; most fantastic waterspouts; labelled windows, not a few of them of painted glass; groups of right Elizabethan chimneys; balconies of divers fashions, greater and lesser; stones carved with heraldries innumerable, let in here and there in the wall; and a very noble projecting gateway, a fac-simile, I am told, of that appertaining to a certain dilapidated royal palace, which long ago seems to have caught in a particular manner the Poet's fancy, as witness the stanza:

Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
Above the rest, beyond compare,
Linlithgow is excelling.

The prints will give you a better notion of these matters than my pen could do,—and, by the by, the best likeness I have as yet met with, is one that adorns the cover of a certain species of sticking plaster. From this porchway, which is spacious and airy, quite open to the elements in front, and adorned with some enormous petrified staghorns overhead, you are admitted by a pair of folding doors at once into the hall, and an imposing *coup d'œil*

the first glimpse of the Poet's interior does present. The lofty windows, only two in number, being wholly covered with coats of arms, the place appears as dark as the twelfth century, on your first entrance from noonday; but the delicious coolness of the atmosphere is luxury enough for a minute or two; and by degrees your eyes get accustomed to the effect of those "storied panes," and you are satisfied that you stand in one of the most picturesque of apartments. The hall is, I should guess, about forty feet long, by twenty in height and breadth. The walls are of richly carved oak, most part of it exceedingly dark, and brought, it seems, from the old palace of Dunfermline: the roof, a series of pointed arches of the same, each beam presenting, in the centre, a shield of arms richly blazoned: of these shields there are sixteen, enough to bear all the quarterings of a perfect pedigree if the Poet could show them; but on the maternal side (at the extremity) there are two or three blanks (of the same sort which made Louis le Grand unhappy) which have been covered with sketches of Cloudland, and equipped with the appropriate motto, "*Nox alta velat.*" The shields, properly filled up, are distinguished ones; the descent of Scott of Harden on one side, and Rutherford *of that ilk* on the other; all which matters, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of Douglas and

Nisbet? There is a doorway at the eastern end, over and round which the Baronet has placed another series of escutcheons, which I looked on with at least as much respect; they are the memorials of his immediate personal connexions, the bearings of his friends and companions. All around the cornice of this noble room, there runs a continued series of blazoned shields, of another sort still; at the centre of one end, I saw the bloody heart of Douglas; and opposite to that, the royal lion of Scotland,—and between the ribs there is an inscription in black letter, which I, after some trials, read, and of which I wish I had had sense enough to take a copy. To the best of my recollection, the words are not unlike these: “These be the coat armories of the clannis and chief men of name, wha keepit the marchys of Scotlande in the aulde tyme for the Kinge. Trewe ware they in their tyme, and in their defense God them defendyt.” There are from thirty to forty shields thus distinguished—Douglas, Soulis, Buccleugh, Maxwell, Johnstoune, Glendoning, Herries, Rutherford, Kerr, Elliot, Pringle, Home, and all the other heroes, as you may guess, of the border minstrelsy. The floor of this hall is black and white marble, from the Hebrides, wrought lozengewise; and the upper walls are completely hung with arms and armour. Two full suits of splendid steel occupy niches at the

eastern end by themselves ; the one an English suit of Henry the Fifth's time, the other an Italian, not quite so old. The variety of cuirasses, black and white, plain and sculptured, is endless; helmets are in equal profusion; stirrups and spurs, of every fantasy, dangle about and below them; and there are swords of every order, from the enormous twohanded weapon with which the Swiss peasants dared to withstand the spears of the Austrian chivalry, to the claymore of the « Forty-five, » and the rapier of Dettingen. Indeed, I might come still lower, for among other spoils, I saw Polish lances, gathered by the author of Paul's Letters on the field of Waterloo, and a complete suit of chain mail taken off the corpse of one of Tippoo's body guard at Seringapatam. A series of German executioners' swords was *inter alia* pointed out to me; on the blade of one of which I made out the arms of Augsburg, and a legend which may be thus rendered :

Dust, when I strike, to dust: From sleepless grave,
Sweet Jesu, stoop, a sin-stained soul to save.

I am sorry there is no catalogue of this curious collection. Sir Walter ought to make one himself, for my cicerone informs me there is some particular history attached to almost every piece in it, and known in detail to nobody but himself. «Stepping westward,» as Wordsworth says, from this hall, you find yourself in a

narrow, low, arched room, which runs quite across the house, having a blazoned window again at either extremity, and filled all over with smaller pieces of armour and weapons, such as swords, firelocks, spears, arrows, darts, daggers, etc. etc. etc. Here are the pieces, esteemed most precious by reason of their histories respectively. I saw, among the rest, Rob Roy's gun, with his initials, R. M. C. i. e. Robert Macgregor Campbell, round the touch-hole : the blunderbuss of Hofer, a present to Sir Walter from his friend Sir Humphry Davy; a most magnificent sword, as magnificently mounted, the gift of Charles the First to the great Montrose, and having the arms of Prince Henry worked on the hilt; the hunting bottle of bonnie King Jamie; Buonaparte's pistols (found in his carriage at Waterloo, I believe), *cum multis aliis*. I should have mentioned that staghorns and bulls' horns (the petrified relics of the old mountain monster, I mean), and so forth, are suspended in great abundance above all the doorways of these armories; and that, in one corner, a dark one as it ought to be, there is a complete assortment of the old Scottish instruments of torture, not forgetting the very thumbikens under which Cardinal Carstairs did *not* flinch, and the more terrific iron crown of Wisheart the Martyr, being a sort of barred head-piece, screwed on the victim at the stake, to prevent him from crying

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aloud in his agony. In short, there can be no doubt that, like Grose of merry memory, the mighty Minstrel

—— Has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets,
Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
A towmont guid.

These relics of other, and for the most part darker, years, are disposed, however, with so much grace and elegance, that I doubt if Mr Hope himself would find any thing to quarrel with in the beautiful apartments which contain them. The smaller of these opens to the drawing room on one side and the dining room on the other, and is fitted up with low *divans* rather than sofas; so as to make, I doubt not, a most agreeable sitting room when the apartments are occupied, as for my sins I found them not. In the hall, when the weather is hot, the Baronet is accustomed to dine; and a gallant refectory, no question, it must make. A ponderous chandelier of painted glass swings from the roof; and the chimney-piece (the design copied from the stonework of the Abbot's Stall at Melrose) would hold rafters enough for a Christmas fire of the good old times. Were the company suitably attired, a dinner party here would look like a scene in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Beyond the smaller, or rather, I should say,

the narrower armoury, lies the dining parlour proper, however; and though there is nothing Udolphoish here, yet I can well believe that, when lighted up, and the curtains drawn at night, the place may give no bad notion of the private snuggerly of some lofty lord abbot of the time of the Canterbury Tales. The room is a very handsome one, with a low and very richly carved roof of dark oak again; a huge projecting bow window, and the dais elevated *more majorum*: the ornaments of the roof, niches for lamps, etc. etc. in short, all the minor details, are, I believe, fac similes after Melrose. The walls are hung in crimson, but almost entirely covered with pictures, of which the most remarkable are—the parliamentary general, Lord Essex, a full length on horseback; the Duke of Monmouth, by Lely; a capital Hogarth, by himself; Prior and Gay, both by Jervas; and the head of Mary Queen of Scots, in a charger, painted by Amias Canrood the day after the decapitation at Fotheringay, and sent some years ago as a present to Sir Walter from a Prussian nobleman, in whose family it had been for more than two centuries. It is a most deathlike performance, and the countenance answers well enough to the coins of the unfortunate beauty, though not at all to any of the portraits I have happened to see. I believe there is no doubt as to the authenticity of this most curious picture. Among various

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family pictures, I noticed particularly Sir Walter's great grandfather, the old cavalier mentioned in one of the epistles in Marmion, who let his beard grow after the execution of Charles the First, and who here appears, accordingly, with a most venerable appendage of silver whiteness, reaching even unto his girdle. This old gentleman's son hangs close by him; and had it not been for the costume, etc. I should have taken it for a likeness of Sir Walter himself. (It is very like the common portraits of the Poet, though certainly not like either Sir Thomas Lawrence's picture or Chantrey's bust). There is also a very splendid full length of Lucy Waters, mother to the Duke of Monmouth; and an oval, capitally painted, of Anne Duchess of Buccleugh, the same who,

In pride of youth, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

All the furniture of this room is massy Gothic oak; and, as I said before, when it is fairly lit up, and plate and glass set forth, it must needs have a richly and luxuriously antique aspect. Beyond and alongside are narrowish passages, which make one fancy one's self in the penetralia of some dim old monastery; for roofs and walls and windows (square, round, and oval alike) are sculptured in stone, after the richest relics of Melrose and Roslin Chapel.

One of these leads to a charming breakfast room, which looks to the Tweed on one side, and towards Yarrow and Ettricke, famed in song, on the other: a cheerful room, fitted up with novels, romances, and poetry, I could perceive, at one end; and the other walls covered thick and thicker with a most valuable and beautiful collection of watercolour drawings, chiefly by Turner, and Thomson of Duddingstone, the designs, in short, for the magnificent work entitled « Provincial Antiquities of Scotland.» There is one very grand oil painting over the chimneypiece, Fastcastle, by Thomson, alias the Wolf's Crag of the Bride of Lammermoor, one of the most majestic and melancholy sea-pieces I ever saw; and some large black and white drawings of the Vision of Don Roderick, by Sir James Steuart of Allanbank (whose illustrations of Marmion and Mazeppa you have seen or heard of), are at one end of the parlour. The room is crammed with queer cabinets and boxes, and in a niche there is a bust of old Henry Mackenzie, by Joseph of Edinburgh. Returning towards the armoury, you have, on one side of a most religious looking corridor, a small greenhouse with a fountain playing before it—the very fountain that in days of yore graced the cross of Edinburgh, and used to flow with claret at the coronation of the Stuarts—a pretty design, and a standing monument of the barbarity of modern inno-

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vation. From the small armoury you pass, as I said before, into the drawing room, a large, lofty, and splendid *salon*, with antique ebony furniture and crimson silk hangings, cabinets, china, and mirrors *quantum suff.* and some portraits; among the rest glorious John Dryden, by Sir Peter Lely, with his grey hairs floating about in a most picturesque style, eyes full of wildness, presenting the old Bard, I take it, in one of those « tremulous moods, » in which we have it on record he appeared when interrupted in the midst of his *Alexander's Feast*. From this you pass into the largest of all the apartments, the library, which, I must say, is really a noble room. It is an oblong of some fifty feet by thirty, with a projection in the centre, opposite the fireplace, terminating in a grand bow window, fitted up with books also, and, in fact, constituting a sort of chapel to the church. The roof is of carved oak again—a very rich pattern—I believe chiefly *à la Roslin*, and the bookcases, which are also of richly carved oak, reach high up the walls all round. The collection amounts, in this room, to some fifteen or twenty thousand volumes, arranged according to their subjects: British history and antiquities filling the whole of the chief wall; English poetry and drama, classics and miscellanies, one end; foreign literature, chiefly French and German, the other. The cases on the side

opposite the fire are wired, and locked, as containing articles very precious and very portable. One consists entirely of books and MSS. relating to the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and another (within the recess of the bow window), of treatises *de re magica*, both of these being (I am told, and can well believe), in their several ways, collections of the rarest curiosity. My cicerone pointed out, in one corner, a magnificent set of Montfaucon, ten volumes folio, bound in the richest manner in scarlet, and stamped with the royal arms, the gift of his present Majesty. There are few living authors of whose works presentation copies are not to be found here. My friend showed me inscriptions of that sort in, I believe, every European dialect extant. The books are all in prime condition, and bindings that would satisfy Mr Dibdin. The only picture is Sir Walter's eldest son, in hussar uniform, and holding his horse, by Allan of Edinburgh, a noble portrait, over the fireplace; and the only bust is that of Shakspeare, from the Avon monument, in a small niche in the centre of the east side. On a rich stand of porphyry, in one corner, reposes a tall silver urn filled with bones from the Piræus, and bearing the inscription, « Given by George Gordon, Lord Byron, to Sir Walter Scott, Bart. » It contained the letter which accompanied the gift till lately: it has disappeared; no one

guesses who took it, but whoever he was, as my guide observed, he must have been a thief for thieving's sake truly, as he durst no more exhibit his autograph than tip himself a bare bodkin. Sad, infamous tourist indeed! Although I saw abundance of comfortable looking desks and arm chairs, yet this room seemed rather too large and fine for *work*, and I found accordingly, after passing a double pair of doors, that there was a *sanctum* within and beyond this library. And here you may believe was not to me the least interesting, though by no means the most splendid, part of the suite.

The lion's own den proper, then, is a room of about five-and-twenty feet square by twenty feet high, containing of what is properly called furniture nothing but a small writing table in the centre, a plain arm chair covered with black leather—a very comfortable one though, for I tried it—and a single chair besides, plain symptoms that this is no place for company. On either side of the fireplace there are shelves filled with duodecimos and books of reference, chiefly, of course, folios; but except these there are no books save the contents of a light gallery which runs round three sides of the room, and is reached by a hanging stair of carved oak in one corner. You have been both at the Élysée Bourbon and Malmaison, and remember the library at one or other of those places, I forget which; this gallery is

much in the same style. There are only two portraits, an original of the beautiful and melancholy head of Claverhouse, and a small full length of Rob Roy. Various little antique cabinets stand round about, each having a bust on it: Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims are on the mantelpiece; and in one corner I saw a collection of really useful weapons, those of the forest-craft, to wit—axes and bills and so forth of every calibre. There is only one window pierced in a very thick wall, so that the place is rather sombre; the light tracery work of the gallery overhead harmonizes with the books well. It is a very comfortable looking room, and very unlike any other I ever was in. I should not forget some Highland claymores, clustered round a target over the Canterbury people, nor a writing box of carved wood, lined with crimson velvet, and furnished with silver plate of right venerable aspect, which looked as if it might have been the implement of old Chaucer himself, but which from the arms on the lid must have belonged to some Italian prince of the days of Leo the Magnificent at the furthest.

In one corner of this *sanctum* there is a little holy of holies, in the shape of a closet, which looks like the oratory of some dame of old romance, and opens into the gardens; and the tower which furnishes this below, forms above a private staircase accessible from the gallery,

and leading to the upper regions. Thither also I penetrated, but I suppose you will take the bed rooms and dressing rooms for granted.

The view to the Tweed from all the principal apartments is beautiful. You look out from among bowers, over a lawn of sweet turf, upon the clearest of all streams, fringed with the wildest of birch woods, and backed with the green hills of Ettricke Forest. The rest you must imagine. Altogether, the place destined to receive so many pilgrimages contains within itself beauties not unworthy of its associations. Few poets ever inhabited such a place; none, ere now, ever created one. It is the realization of dreams: some Frenchman called it, I hear, «a romance in stone and lime.»

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BURNS.

THE following description of the celebrated Burns, from recollection, is given by his illustrious countryman:—

«As for Burns,» says Sir Walter Scott, «I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to

know him; but I had very little acquaintance with literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sat silent, and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns' manner, was the effect produced on him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath—

Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain—
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew;
'The big drops, mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,—
The child of misery baptized in tears.

« Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked

whose the lines were? and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure.

« His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic—not clownish: a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect, perhaps, from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr Nasmyth's picture; but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scots school, *i. e.* none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head,

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though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

« I remember on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns' acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models; there was, doubtless, national predilection in his estimate.

« This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak in *malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station and information, more perfectly free

from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humourous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.¹—I do not know any thing I can add to these recollections of forty years since.”

¹ We recollect having met with a passage in Burns's Letters, to which we cannot at present refer, strikingly illustrating this remark. It was to this effect—that on becoming familiar with the higher ranks of life, he saw nothing among the men that particularly distinguished them from men of his own class; but the women appeared quite a new race—quite different from what his experience had led him to anticipate.—EDITOR.

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THE TAPESTRIED CHAMBER,

OR

THE LADY IN THE SACQUE.

THE following narrative is given from the pen, so far as memory permits, in the same character in which it was presented to the author's ear; nor has he claim to further praise, or to be more deeply censured, than in proportion to the good or bad judgment which he has employed in selecting his materials, as he has studiously avoided any attempt at ornament which might interfere with the simplicity of the tale.

At the same time it must be admitted, that the particular class of stories which turns on the marvellous, possesses a stronger influence when told, than when committed to print. The volume taken up at noonday, though rehearsing the same incidents, conveys a much more feeble impression, than is achieved by the voice of the speaker on a circle of fire-side auditors, who hang upon the narrative as the narrator details the minute incidents which

serve to give it authenticity, and lowers his voice with an affectation of mystery while he approaches the fearful and wonderful part. It was with such advantages that the present writer heard the following events related, more than twenty years since, by the celebrated Miss Seward, of Lichfield, who, to her numerous accomplishments, added, in a remarkable degree, the power of narrative in private conversation. In its present form the tale must necessarily lose all the interest which was attached to it, by the flexible voice and intelligent features of the gifted narrator. Yet still, read aloud, to an undoubting audience by the doubtful light of the closing evening, or, in silence, by a decaying taper, and amidst the solitude of a half-lighted apartment, it may redeem its character as a good ghost story. Miss Seward always affirmed that she had derived her information from an authentic source, although she suppressed the names of the two persons chiefly concerned. I will not avail myself of any particulars I may have since received concerning the localities of the detail, but suffer them to rest under the same general description in which they were first related to me; and for the same reason, I will not add to, or diminish the narrative, by any circumstance, whether more or less material, but simply rehearse, as I heard it, a story of supernatural terror.

About the end of the American war, when the officers of Lord Cornwallis's army, which surrendered at York-town, and others, who had been made prisoners during the impolitic and ill-fated controversy, were returning to their own country, to relate their adventures, and repose themselves after their fatigues; there was amongst them a general officer, to whom Miss S. gave the name of Browne, but merely, as I understood, to save the inconvenience of introducing a nameless agent in the narrative. He was an officer of merit, as well as a gentleman of high consideration for family and attainments.

Some business had carried General Browne upon a tour through the western counties, when, in the conclusion of a morning stage, he found himself in the vicinity of a small country town, which presented a scene of uncommon beauty, and of a character peculiarly English.

The little town, with its stately old church, whose tower bore testimony to the devotion of ages long past, lay amidst pastures and corn-fields of small extent, but bounded and divided with hedge-row timber of great age and size. There were few marks of modern improvement. The environs of the place intimated neither the solitude of decay, nor the bustle of novelty: the houses were old, but in good repair; and the beautiful little river mur-

mured freely on its way to the left of the town, neither ~~restrained~~ by a dam, nor bordered by a towing-path.

Upon a gentle eminence, nearly a mile to the southward of the town, were seen, amongst many venerable oaks and tangled thickets, the turrets of a castle, as old as the wars of York and Lancaster, but which seemed to have received some important alterations during the age of Elizabeth and her successor. It had not been a place of great size : but whatever accommodation it formerly afforded, was, it must be supposed, still to be obtained within its walls; at least, such was the inference which General Browne drew from observing the smoke arise merrily from several of the ancient wreathed and carved chimney-stalks. The wall of the park ran alongside of the highway for two or three hundred yards; and through the different points by which the eye found glimpses into the woodland scenery, it seemed to be well stocked. Other points of view opened in succession : now a full one, of the front of the old castle, and now a side glimpse at its particular towers; the former rich in all the bizarrerie of the Elizabethan school, while the simple and solid strength of other parts of the building seemed to show that they had been raised more for defence than ostentation.

Delighted with the partial glimpses which he obtained of the castle through the woods

and glades by which this ancient feudal fortress was surrounded, our military traveller was determined to inquire whether it might not deserve a nearer view, and whether it contained family pictures or other objects of curiosity worthy of a stranger's visit; when, leaving the vicinity of the park, he rolled through a clean and well-paved street, and stopped at the door of a well-frequented inn.

Before ordering horses to proceed on his journey, General Browne made inquiries concerning the proprietor of the chateau which had so attracted his admiration; and was equally surprised and pleased at hearing in reply a nobleman named, whom we shall call Lord Woodville. How fortunate! Much of Browne's early recollections, both at school and at college, had been connected with young Woodville, whom, by a few questions, he now ascertained to be the same with the owner of this fair domain. He had been raised to the peerage by the decease of his father a few months before, and, as the general learned from the landlord, the term of mourning being ended, was now taking possession of his paternal estate, in the jovial season of merry autumn, accompanied by a select party of friends to enjoy the sports of a country famous for game.

This was delightful news to our traveller. Frank Woodville had been Richard Browne's

fag at Eton, and his chosen intimate at Christ Church : their pleasures and their tasks had been the same; and the honest soldier's heart warmed to find his early friend in possession of so delightful a residence, and of an estate, as the landlord assured him with a nod and a wink, fully adequate to maintain and add to his dignity. Nothing was more natural than that the traveller should suspend a journey, which there was nothing to render hurried, to pay a visit to an old friend under such agreeable circumstances.

The fresh horses, therefore, had only the brief task of conveying the general's travelling carriage to Woodville Castle. A porter admitted them at a modern gothic lodge, built in that style to correspond with the castle itself, and at the same time rang a bell to give warning of the approach of visitors. Apparently the sound of the bell had suspended the separation of the company, bent on the various amusements of the morning; for, on entering the court of the chateau, several young men were lounging about in their sporting dresses, looking at, and criticising, the dogs which the keepers held in readiness to attend their pastime. As General Browne alighted the young lord came to the gate of the hall, and for an instant gazed, as at a stranger, upon the countenance of his friend, on which, war, with its fatigues and its wounds, had made a great

alteration. But the uncertainty lasted no longer than till the visitor had spoken, and the hearty greeting which followed was such as can only be exchanged betwixt those, who have passed together the merry days of careless boyhood and early youth.

“If I could have formed a wish, my dear Browne,” said Lord Woodville, “it would have been to have you here, of all men, upon this occasion, which my friends are good enough to hold as a sort of holiday. Do not think you have been unwatched during the many years you have been absent from us. I have traced you through your dangers, your triumphs, your misfortunes, and was delighted to see that, whether in victory or defeat, the name of my old friend was always distinguished with applause.”

The general made a suitable reply, and congratulated his friend on his new dignities, and the possession of a place and domain so beautiful.

“Nay, you have seen nothing of it as yet,” said Lord Woodville — “and I trust you do not mean to leave us until you are better acquainted with it. It is true, I confess, that my present party is pretty large, and the old house, like other places of the kind, does not possess so much accommodation as the extent of the outward walls appears to promise. But we can give you a comfortable old-fashioned

room, and I venture to suppose that your campaigns have taught you to be glad of worse quarters.”

The general shrugged his shoulders, and laughed. “I presume,” he said, “the worst apartment in your chateau is considerably superior to the old tobacco-cask, in which I was fain to take up my night’s lodging when I was in the Bush, as the Virginians call it, with the light corps. There I lay, like Diogenes himself, so delighted with my covering from the element, that I made a vain attempt to have it rolled on to my next quarters : but my commander for the time would give way to no such luxurious provision, and I took farewell of my beloved cask with tears in my eyes.”

“Well, then, since you do not fear your quarters,” said Lord Woodville, “you will stay with me a week at least. Of guns, dogs, fishing-rods, flies, and means of sport by sea and land, we have enough and to spare : you cannot pitch on an amusement but we will find the means of pursuing it. But if you prefer the gun and pointers, I will go with you myself and see whether you have mended your shooting since you have been amongst the Indians of the back settlements.”

The general gladly accepted his friendly host’s proposal in all its points. After a morning of manly exercise, the company met at dinner, where it was the delight of Lord

Woodville to ^{Erzählung}conduce to the ^{Medelgebunden}display of the high properties of his recovered friend, so as to recommend him to his guests, most of whom were persons of distinction. He led General Browne to speak of the scenes he had witnessed; and as every word marked alike the brave officer and the sensible man, who retained possession of his cool judgment under the most imminent dangers, the company looked upon the soldier with general respect, as on one who had proved himself possessed of an uncommon portion of personal courage; that attribute, of all others, of which every body desires to be thought possessed.

The day at Woodville Castle ended as usual in such mansions. The hospitality stopped within the limits of good order: music, in which the young lord was a proficient, succeeded to the circulation of the bottle: cards and billiards, for those who preferred such amusements, were in readiness: but the exercise of the morning required early hours, and not long after eleven o'clock the guests began to retire to their several apartments.

The young lord himself conducted his friend, General Browne, to the chamber destined for him, which answered the description he had given of it, being comfortable, but old-fashioned. The bed was of the massive form used in the end of the seventeenth century, and the curtains of faded silk, heavily trimmed

with tarnished gold. But then the sheets, pillows, and blankets, looked delightful to the campaigner, when he thought of his « mansion, the cask.» There was an air of gloom in the tapestry hangings, which, with their worn-out graces, curtained the walls of the little chamber, and gently undulated as the autumnal breeze found its way through the ancient lattice-window, which pattered and whistled as the air gained entrance. The toilet, too, with its mirror, turbaned, after the manner of the beginning of the century, with a coiffure of murrey-coloured silk, and its hundred strange-shaped boxes, providing for arrangements which had been obsolete for more than fifty years, had an antique, and in so far a melancholy, aspect. But nothing could blaze more brightly and cheerfully than the two large wax candles : or if aught could rival them, it was the flaming bickering faggots in the chimney, that sent at once their gleam and their warmth through the snug apartment : which, notwithstanding the general antiquity of its appearance, was not wanting in the least convenience, that modern habits rendered either necessary or desirable.

« This is an old-fashioned sleeping apartment, general, » said the young lord, « but I hope you find nothing that makes you envy your old tobacco cask.»

« I am not particular respecting my lodg-

ings," replied the general—"yet were I to make any choice, I would prefer this chamber, by many degrees, to the gayer and more modern rooms of your family mansion. Believe me, that when I unite its modern air of comfort with its venerable antiquity, and recollect that it is your lordship's property, I shall feel in better quarters here, than if I were in the best hotel London could afford."

"I trust—I have no doubt—that you will find yourself as comfortable as I wish you, my dear general," said the young nobleman—and once more bidding his guest good night, he shook him by the hand, and withdrew.

The general once more looked round him, and internally congratulating himself on his return to peaceful life, the comforts of which were endeared by the recollection of the hardships and the dangers he had lately sustained, undressed himself, and prepared for a luxurious night's rest.

Here, contrary to the custom of this species of tale, we leave the general in possession of his apartment until the next morning.

The company assembled for breakfast at an early hour, but without the appearance of General Browne, who seemed the guest that Lord Woodville was desirous of honouring above all whom his hospitality had assembled around him. He more than once expressed surprise at the general's absence, and at length sent a

servant to make inquiry after him. The man brought back information that General Browne had been walking abroad since an early hour of the morning, in defiance of the weather, which was misty and ungenial.

«The custom of a soldier,» said the young nobleman to his friends; «many of them acquire habitual vigilance, and cannot sleep after the early hour at which their duty usually commands them to be alert.»

Yet the explanation which Lord Woodville then offered to the company seemed hardly satisfactory to his own mind, and it was in a fit of silence and abstraction that he awaited the return of the general. It took place near an hour after the breakfast bell had rung. He looked fatigued and feverish. His hair, the powdering and arrangement of which was at this time one of the most important occupations of a man's whole day, and marked his fashion as much as, in the present time, the tying of a cravat, or the want of one, was dishevelled, uncurled, void of powder, and dank with dew. His clothes were huddled on with a careless negligence, remarkable in a military man, whose real or supposed duties are usually held to include some attention to the toilet; and his looks were haggard and ghastly in a peculiar degree.

«So you have stolen a march upon us this morning, my dear general,» said Lord Wood-

ville; «or you have not found your bed so much to your mind as I had hoped and you seemed to expect. How did you rest last night?»

«Oh, excellently! remarkably well! never better in my life»—said General Browne rapidly, and yet with an air of embarrassment which was obvious to his friend. He then hastily swallowed a cup of tea, and, neglecting or refusing whatever else was offered, seemed to fall into a fit of abstraction.

«You will take the gun to-day, General?» said his friend and host, but had to repeat the question twice ere he received the abrupt answer, «No, my lord; I am sorry I cannot have the honour of spending another day with your lordship: my post-horses are ordered, and will be here directly.»

All who were present showed surprise, and Lord Woodville immediately replied, «Post-horses, my good friend! what can you possibly want with them, when you promised to stop with me quietly for at least a week?»

«I believe,» said the general, obviously much embarrassed,—«that I might, in the pleasure of my first meeting with your lordship, have said something about stopping here a few days; but I have since found it altogether impossible.»

«That is very extraordinary,» answered the young nobleman. «You seemed quite disen-

gaged yesterday, and you cannot have had a summons to-day; for our post has not come up from the town, and therefore you cannot have received any letters.”

General Browne, without giving any further explanation, muttered something of indispensable business, and insisted upon the absolute necessity of his departure in a manner which silenced all opposition on the part of his host, who saw that his resolution was taken, and forbore all further importunity.

“At least, however,” he said, “permit me, my dear Browne, since go you will or must, to show you the view from the terrace, which the mist, that is now rising, will soon display.”

He threw open a sash-window, and stepped down upon the terrace as he spoke. The general followed him mechanically, but seemed little to attend to what his host was saying, as, looking across an extended and rich prospect, he pointed out the different objects worthy of observation. Thus they moved on until Lord Woodville had attained his purpose of drawing his guest entirely apart from the rest of the company, when, turning round upon him with an air of great solemnity, he addressed him thus :

“Richard Browne, my old and very dear friend, we are now alone. Let me conjure you to answer me upon the word of a friend,

and the honour of a soldier. How did you in reality rest during last night?"

"Most wretchedly indeed, my lord," answered the general, in the same tone of solemnity—"so miserably, that I would not run the risk of such a second night, not only for all the lands belonging to this castle, but for all the country which I see from this elevated point of view."

"This is most extraordinary," said the young lord, as if speaking to himself; "then there must be something in the reports concerning that apartment." Again turning to the general, he said, "For God's sake, my dear friend, be candid with me, and let me know the disagreeable particulars which have befallen you under a roof where, with consent of the owner, you should have met nothing save comfort."

The general seemed distressed by this appeal, and paused a moment before he replied. "My dear lord," he at length said, "what happened to me last night is of a nature so peculiar and so unpleasant, that I could hardly bring myself to detail it even to your lordship, were it not that, independent of my wish to gratify any request of yours, I think that sincerity on my part may lead to some explanation about a circumstance equally painful and mysterious. To others, the communication I am about to make, might place me in the light

of a weak-minded, superstitious fool, who suffered his own imagination to delude and bewilder him : but you have known me in childhood and youth, and will not suspect me of having adopted in manhood the feelings and frailties from which my early years were free." Here he paused, and his friend replied :

"Do not doubt my perfect confidence in the truth of your communication, however strange it may be," replied Lord Woodville : "I know your firmness of disposition too well, to suspect you could be made the object of imposition, and am aware that your honour and your friendship will equally deter you from exaggerating whatever you may have witnessed."

"Well then," said the general, "I will proceed with my story as well as I can, relying upon your candour : and yet distinctly feeling that I would rather face a battery than recall to my mind the odious recollections of last night."

He paused a second time, and then perceiving that Lord Woodville remained silent and in an attitude of attention, he commenced, though not without obvious reluctance, the history of his night adventures in the Tapestried Chamber.

"I undressed and went to bed, so soon as your lordship left me yesterday evening; but the wood in the chimney, which nearly fronted my bed, blazed brightly and cheerfully, and,

aided by a hundred exciting recollections of my childhood and youth, which had been recalled by the unexpected pleasure of meeting your lordship, prevented me from falling immediately asleep. I ought, however, to say, that these reflections were all of a pleasant and agreeable kind, grounded on a sense of having for a time exchanged the labour, fatigues, and dangers of my profession, for the enjoyments of a peaceful life, and the reunion of those friendly and affectionate ties, which I had torn asunder at the rude summons of war.

« While such pleasing reflections were stealing over my mind, and gradually lulling me to slumber, I was suddenly aroused by a sound like that of the rustling of a silken gown, and the tapping of a pair of high-heeled shoes, as if a woman were walking in the apartment. Ere I could draw the curtain to see what the matter was, the figure of a little woman passed between the bed and the fire. The back of this form was turned to me, and I could observe, from the shoulders and neck, it was that of an old woman, whose dress was an old-fashioned gown, which, I think, ladies call a sacque; that is, a sort of robe completely loose in the body, but gathered into broad plaits upon the neck and shoulders, which fall down to the ground, and terminate in a species of train.

« I thought the intrusion singular enough,

but never harboured for a moment the idea that what I saw was any thing more than the mortal form of some old woman about the establishment, who had a fancy to dress like her grandmother, and who, having perhaps (as your lordship mentioned that you were straitened for room) been dislodged from her chamber for my accommodation, had forgotten the circumstance, and returned by twelve, to her old haunt. Under this persuasion I moved myself in bed and coughed a little, to make the intruder sensible of my being in possession of the premises.—She turned slowly round, but, gracious heaven! my lord, what a countenance did she display to me! There was no longer any question what she was, or any thought of her being a living being. Upon a face which wore the fixed features of a corpse were imprinted the traces of the vilest and most hideous passions which had animated her while she lived. The body of some atrocious criminal seemed to have been given up from the grave, and the soul restored from the penal fire, in order to form, for a space, an union with the ancient accomplice of its guilt. I started up in bed, and sat upright, supporting myself on my palms, as I gazed on this horrible spectre. The hag made, as it seemed, a single and swift stride to the bed where I lay, and squatted herself down upon it, in precisely the same attitude which I had assumed

in the extremity of my horror, advancing her diabolical countenance within half a yard of mine, with a grin which seemed to intimate the malice and the derision of an incarnate fiend."

Here General Browne stopped, and wiped from his brow the cold perspiration with which the recollection of his horrible vision had covered it.

"My lord," he said, "I am no coward. I have been in all the mortal dangers incidental to my profession, and I may truly boast, that no man ever saw Richard Browne dishonour the sword he wears; but in these horrible circumstances, under the eyes, and, as it seemed, almost in the grasp of an incarnation of an evil spirit, all firmness forsook me, all manhood melted from me like wax in the furnace, and I felt my hair individually bristle. The current of my life-blood ceased to flow, and I sank back in a swoon, as very a victim to panic terror as ever was a village girl, or a child of ten years old. How long I lay in this condition I cannot pretend to guess.

"But I was roused by the castle clock striking one, so loud that it seemed as if it were in the very room. It was some time before I dared open my eyes, lest they should again encounter the horrible spectacle. When, however, I summoned courage to look up, she was no longer visible. My first idea was to pull

my bell, wake the servants, and remove to a garret or a hay-loft, to be ensured against a second visitation. Nay, I will confess the truth, that my resolution was altered, not by the shame of exposing myself, but by the fear that, as the bell-cord hung by the chimney, I might, in making my way to it, be again crossed by the fiendish hag, who, I figured to myself, might be still lurking about some corner of the apartment.

“ I will not pretend to describe what hot and cold fever-fits tormented me for the rest of the night, through broken sleep, weary vigils, and that dubious state which forms the neutral ground between them. An hundred terrible objects appeared to haunt me ; but there was the great difference betwixt the vision which I have described, and those which followed, that I knew the last to be deceptions of my own fancy and over-excited nerves.

“ Day at last appeared, and I rose from my bed ill in health, and humiliated in mind. I was ashamed of myself as a man and a soldier, and still more so, at feeling my own extreme desire to escape from the haunted apartment, which, however, conquered all other considerations ; so that, huddling on my clothes with the most careless haste, I made my escape from your lordship’s mansion, to seek in the open air some relief to my nervous system, shaken as it was by this horrible rencounter

with a visitant, for such I must believe her, from the other world. Your lordship has now heard the cause of my discomposure, and of my sudden desire to leave your hospitable castle. In other places I trust we may often meet; but God protect me from ever spending a second night under that roof!"

Strange as the general's tale was, he spoke with such a deep air of conviction, that it cut short all the usual commentaries which are made on such stories. Lord Woodville never once asked him if he was sure he did not dream of the apparition, or suggested any of the possibilities by which it is fashionable to explain apparitions, — wild vagaries of the fancy, or deception of the optic nerves. On the contrary, he seemed deeply impressed with the truth and reality of what he had heard; and, after a considerable pause, regretted, with much appearance of sincerity, that his early friend should in his house have suffered so severely.

"I am the more sorry for your pain, my dear Browne," he continued, "that it is the unhappy, though most unexpected, result of an experiment of my own. You must know, that for my father and grandfather's time, at least, the apartment which was assigned to you last night had been shut on account of reports that it had been disturbed by supernatural sights and noises. When I came, a few weeks

since, into possession of the estate, I thought the accommodation, which the castle afforded for my friends, was not extensive enough to permit the inhabitants of the invisible world to retain possession of a comfortable sleeping apartment. I therefore caused the Tapestried Chamber, as we call it, to be opened ; and, without destroying its air of antiquity, I had such new articles of furniture placed in it as became the more modern times. Yet as the opinion that the room was haunted very strongly prevailed among the domestics, and was also known in the neighbourhood and to many of my friends, I feared some prejudice might be entertained by the first occupant of the Tapestried Chamber, which might tend to revive the evil report which it had laboured under, and so disappoint my purpose of rendering it an useful part of the house. I must confess, my dear Browne, that your arrival yesterday, agreeable to me for a thousand reasons besides, seemed to me the most favourable opportunity for removing the unpleasant rumours which attached to the room, since your courage was indubitable, and your mind free from any pre-occupation on the subject. I could not, therefore, have chosen a more fitting subject for my experiment."

" Upon my life," said General Browne, somewhat hastily, " I am infinitely obliged to your lordship—very particularly indebted in-

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deed. I am likely to remember for some time the consequences of the experiment, as your lordship is pleased to call it."

"Nay, now you are unjust, my dear friend," said Lord Woodville. "You have only to reflect for a single moment, in order to be convinced that I could not augur the possibility of the pain to which you have been so unhappily exposed. I was yesterday morning a complete sceptic on the subject of supernatural appearances. Nay, I am sure that had I told you what was said about that room, those very reports would have induced you, by your own choice, to select it for your accommodation. It was my misfortune, perhaps my error, but really cannot be termed my fault, that you have been afflicted so strangely."

"Strangely indeed!" said the general, resuming his good temper—"and I acknowledge that I have no right to be offended with your lordship for treating me like what I used to think myself—a man of some firmness and courage. But I see my post-horses are arrived, and I must not detain your lordship from your amusement."

"Nay, my old friend," said Lord Woodville, "since you cannot stay with us another day, which, indeed, I can no longer urge, give me at least half an hour more. You used to love pictures, and I have a gallery of portraits, some of them by Vandyke, representing an-

cestry to whom this property and castle formerly belonged. I think that several of them will strike you as possessing merit."

General Browne accepted the invitation, though somewhat unwillingly. It was evident he was not to breathe freely or at ease, till he left Woodville Castle far behind him. He could not refuse his friend's invitation, however; and the less so, that he was a little ashamed of the peevishness which he had displayed towards his well-meaning entertainer.

The general, therefore, followed Lord Woodville through several rooms, into a long gallery hung with pictures, which the latter pointed out to his guest, telling the names, and giving some account of the personages whose portraits presented themselves in progression. General Browne was but little interested in the details which these accounts conveyed to him. They were, indeed, of the kind which are usually found in an old family gallery.—Here, was a cavalier who had ruined the estate in the royal cause; there, a fine lady who had reinstated it by contracting a match with a wealthy round-head. There, hung a gallant who had been in danger for corresponding with the exiled court at St Germain: here, one who had taken arms for William at the revolution; and there, a third who had thrown

his weight alternately into the scale of whig and tory.

While Lord Woodville was cramming these words into his guest's ear, « against the stomach of his sense, » they gained the middle of the gallery, when he beheld General Browne suddenly start, and assume an attitude of the utmost surprise, not unmixed with fear, as his eyes were caught and suddenly riveted by a portrait of an old lady in a sacque, the fashionable dress of the end of the seventeenth century.

« There she is ! » he exclaimed, « there she is, in form and features, though inferior in demoniac expression to the cursed hag who visited me last night. »

« If that be the case, » said the young nobleman, « there can remain no longer any doubt of the horrible reality of your apparition. That is the picture of a wretched ancestress of mine, of whose crimes a black and fearful catalogue is recorded in a family history in my charter-chest. The recital of them would be too horrible : it is enough to say, that in yon fatal apartment incest, and unnatural murder, were committed. I will restore it to the solitude to which the better judgment of those who preceded me had consigned it ; and never shall any one, so long as I can prevent it, be exposed to a repetition of the superna-

tural horrors that could shake such courage as yours."

Thus the friends, who had met with such glee, parted in a very different mood; Lord Woodville to command the Tapestryed Chamber to be unmantled, and the door built up; and General Browne to seek in some less beautiful country, and with some less dignified friend, forgetfulness of the painful night which he had passed in Woodville Castle.

MY AUNT MARGARET'S MIRROR.

There are times
When Fancy plays her gambols, in despite
Even of our watchful senses, when in sooth
Substance seems shadow, shadow substance seems ;
When the broad, palpable, and mark'd partition
'Twixt that which is, and is not, seems disclosed,
As if the mental eye gain'd power to gaze
Beyond the limits of the existing world.
Such hours of shadowy dreams I better love
Than all the gross realities of life.

Anonymous.

My Aunt Margaret was one of that respected sisterhood upon whom devolve all the trouble and solicitude incidental to the possession of children, excepting only that which attends their entrance into the world. We were a large family, of very different dispositions and constitutions. Some were dull and peevish—they were sent to Aunt Margaret to be amused; some were rude, romping, and boisterous—they were sent to Aunt Margaret to be kept quiet, or rather, that their noise might be re-

moved out of hearing ; those who were indisposed were sent with the prospect of being nursed—those who were stubborn, with the hope of their being subdued by the kindness of Aunt Margaret's discipline : in short, she had all the various duties of a mother, without the credit and dignity of the maternal character. The busy scene of her various cares is now over—of the invalids and the robust, the kind and the rough, the peevish and the pleased children who thronged her little parlour from morning to night, not one now remains alive but myself ; who, afflicted by early infirmity, was one of the most delicate of her nurselings, yet, nevertheless, have outlived them all.

It is still my custom, and shall be so while I have the use of my limbs, to visit my respected relation at least three times a-week.—Her abode is about half a mile from the suburbs of the town in which I reside ; and is accessible, not only by the high road, from which it stands at some distance, but by means of a green-sward foot-path, leading through some pretty meadows. I have so little left to torment me in life, that it is one of my greatest vexations to know that several of these sequestered fields have been devoted as sites for building. In that which is nearest the town, wheel-barrows have been at work for several weeks in such numbers, that, I verily believe, its whole surface, to the depth of at least

eighteen inches, was mounted in these monotrochs at the same moment, and in the act of being transported from one place to another. Huge triangular piles of planks are also reared in different parts of the devoted messuage; and a little group of trees, that still grace the eastern end, which rises in a gentle ascent, have just received warning to quit, expressed by a daub of white paint, and are to give place to a curious grove of chimneys.

It would, perhaps, hurt others in my situation to reflect that this little range of pasturage once belonged to my father (whose family was of some consideration in the world), and was sold by patches to remedy distresses in which he involved himself in an attempt by commercial adventure to redeem his diminished fortune. While the building scheme was in full operation, this circumstance was often pointed out to me by the class of friends who are anxious that no part of your misfortunes should escape your observation. "Such pasture ground!—lying at the very town's end—in turnips and potatoes, the packs would bring 20*l.* per acre, and if leased for building—O, it was a gold mine! And all sold for an old song out of the ancient possessor's hands." My comforters cannot bring me to repine much on this subject. If I could be allowed to look back on the past without interruption, I could willingly give up the enjoyment of present income, and

the hope of future profit, to those who have purchased what my father sold. I regret the alteration of the ground only because it destroys associations, and I would more willingly, I think, see the Earl's Closes in the hands of strangers, retaining their sylvan appearance, than know them for my own, if torn up by agriculture, or covered with buildings.—Mine are the sensations of poor Logan :

The horrid plough has razed the green
Where yet a child I strayed ;
The axe has fell'd the hawthorn screen,
The school-boy's summer-shade.

I hope, however, the threatened devastation will not be consummated in my day. Although the adventurous spirit of times a short while since past gave rise to the undertaking, I have been encouraged to think that the subsequent changes have so far damped the spirit of speculation, that the rest of the woodland foot-path leading to Aunt Margaret's retreat will be left undisturbed for her time and mine. I am interested in this, for every step of the way, after I have passed through the green already mentioned, has for me something of early remembrance :—There is the stile at which I can recollect a cross child's-maid upbraiding me with my infirmity, as she lifted me coarsely and carelessly over the flinty steps, which my brothers traversed with shout

and bound. I remember the suppressed bitterness of the moment, and, conscious of my own inferiority, the feeling of envy with which I regarded the easy movements and elastic steps of my more happily formed brethren. Alas ! these goodly barks have all perished on life's wide ocean, and only that which seemed so little sea-worthy, as the naval phrase goes, has reached the port when the tempest is over. Then there is the pool, where, manœuvring our little navy, constructed out of the broad water flags, my elder brother fell in, and was scarce saved from the watery element, to die under Nelson's banner. There is the hazel copse, also, in which my brother Henry used to gather nuts : thinking little that he was to die in an Indian jungle in quest of rupees.

There is so much more of remembrance about the little walk, that,—as I stop, rest on my crutch-headed cane, and look round with that species of comparison between the thing I was and that which I now am,—it almost induces me to doubt my own identity—until I find myself in face of the honey-suckle porch of Aunt Margaret's dwelling, with its irregularity of front, and its odd projecting latticed windows : where the workmen seemed to have made a study that no one of them should resemble another, in form, size, or in the old-fashioned stone entablature, and labels, which adorn them. This tenement, once the

manor-house of Earl's Closes, we still retain a slight hold upon : for, in some family arrangements, it had been settled upon Aunt Margaret during the term of her life. Upon this frail tenure depends, in a great measure, the last shadow of the family of Bothwell of Earl's Closes, and their last slight connexion with their paternal inheritance. The only representatives will then be an infirm old man, moving not unwillingly to the grave, which has devoured all that were dear to his affections.

When I have indulged such thoughts for a minute or two, I enter the mansion, which is said to have been the gate-house only of the original building, and find one being on whom time seems to have made little impression : for the Aunt Margaret of to-day bears the same proportional age to the Aunt Margaret of my early youth, that the boy of ten years old does to the man of (by'r Lady) some fifty-six years. The old lady's invariable costume has doubtless some share in confirming one in the opinion, that time has stood still with Aunt Margaret.

The brown or chocolate-coloured silk gown, with ruffles of the same stuff at the elbow, within which are others of Mechlin lace—the black silk gloves, or mitts, the white hair combed back upon a roll, and the cap of spotless cambric, which closes around the venerable countenance, as they were not the costume of 1780, so neither were they that of

1826 : they are altogether a style peculiar to the individual Aunt Margaret. There she still sits, as she sate thirty years since, with her wheel or her stocking, which she works by the fire in winter, and by the window in summer : or, perhaps, venturing as far as the porch in an unusually fine summer evening. Her frame, like some well-constructed piece of mechanics, still performs the operations for which it had seemed destined : going its round with an activity which is gradually diminished, yet indicating no probability that it will soon come to a period.

The solicitude and affection which had made Aunt Margaret the willing slave to the inflictions of a whole nursery, have now for their object the health and comfort of one old and infirm man : the last remaining relative of her family, and the only one who can still find interest in the traditional stores which she hoards : as some miser hides the gold which he desires that no one should enjoy after his death.

My conversation with Aunt Margaret generally relates little either to the present or to the future : for the passing day we possess as much as we require, and we neither of us wish for more ; and for that which is to follow we have on this side of the grave neither hopes, nor fears, nor anxiety. We therefore naturally look back to the past : and forget the present fallen fortunes and declined im-

portance of our family, in recalling the hours when it was wealthy and prosperous.

With this slight introduction, the reader will know as much of Aunt Margaret and her nephew as is necessary to comprehend the following conversation and narrative.

Last week, when, late in a summer evening, I went to call on the old lady to whom my reader is now introduced, I was received by her with all her usual affection and benignity: while, at the same time, she seemed abstracted and disposed to silence. I asked her the reason. "They have been clearing out the old chapel," she said—"John Clayhudgeons having, it seems, discovered that the stuff within, being, I suppose, the remains of our ancestors—was excellent for top-dressing the meadows."

Here I started up with more alacrity than I have displayed for some years; but sate down while my aunt added, laying her hand upon my sleeve, "The chapel has been long considered as common ground, my dear, and used for a penfold, and what objection can we have to the man for employing what is his own, to his own profit? Besides, I did speak to him, and he very readily and civilly promised, that, if he found bones or monuments, they should be carefully respected and reinstated; and what more could I ask? So, the first stone they found bore the name of Margaret Bothwell, 1585, and I have caused it to be laid

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carefully aside, as I think it betokens death ; and having served my namesake two hundred years, it has just been cast up in time to do me the same good turn. My house has been long put in order, as far as the small earthly concerns require it, but who shall say that their account with Heaven is sufficiently revised?"

"After what you have said, aunt," I replied, "perhaps I ought to take my hat and go away, and so I should, but that there is on this occasion a little alloy mingled with your devotion. To think of death at all times is a duty—to suppose it nearer from the finding an old gravestone is superstition; and you, with your strong useful common sense, which was so long the prop of a fallen family, are the last person whom I should have suspected of such weakness."

"Neither would I deserve your suspicions, kinsman," answered Aunt Margeret, "if we were speaking of any incident occurring in the actual business of human life. But for all this, I have a sense of superstition about me, which I do not wish to part with: it is a feeling which separates me from this age, and links me with that to which I am hastening; and even when it seems, as now, to lead me to the brink of the grave, and bids me gaze on it, I do not love that it should be dispelled. It soothes my imagination, without influencing my reason or conduct."

"I profess, my good lady," replied I, "that had any one but you made such a declaration,

I should have thought it as capricious as that of the clergyman, who, without vindicating his false reading, preferred, from habit's sake, his old Mumpsimus to the modern Sumpsimus."

"Well," answered my aunt, "I must explain my inconsistency in this particular, by comparing it to another. I am, as you know, a piece of that old-fashioned thing called a Jacobite; but I am so in sentiment and feeling only; for a more loyal subject never joined in prayers for the health and wealth of George the Fourth, —whom God long preserve! But I dare say that kind-hearted Sovereign would not deem that an old woman did him much injury, if she leaned back in her arm-chair, just in such a twilight as this, and thought of the high-mettled men, whose sense of duty called them to arms against his grandfather; and how, in a cause which they deemed that of their rightful prince and country—

They fought till their hand to the broadsword was glued,
They fought against fortune with hearts unsubdued.

Do not come at such a moment, when my head is full of plaids, pibrochs, and claymores, and ask my reason to admit what, I am afraid, it cannot deny,—I mean that the public advantage peremptorily demanded that these things should cease to exist. I cannot, indeed, refuse to allow the justice of your reasoning; but yet, being convinced against my will, you will

gain little by your motion. You might as well read to an infatuated lover the catalogue of his mistress's imperfections; for, when he has been compelled to listen to the summary you will only get for answer, that 'he lo'es her a' the better.'»

I was not sorry to have changed the gloomy train of Aunt Margaret's thoughts, and replied in the same tone, « Well, I can't help being persuaded that our good king is the more sure of Mrs Bothwell's loyal affection, that he has the Stuart right of birth, as well as the Act of Succession, in his favour.»

« Perhaps my attachment, were its source of consequence, might be found warmer for the union of the rights you mention,» said Aunt Margaret— « but, upon my word, it would be as sincere if the king's right were founded only on the will of the nation, as declared at the Revolution. I am none of your *jure divino* folks.»

« And a Jacobite notwithstanding.»

« And a Jacobite notwithstanding; or rather, I will give you leave to call me one of the party, which, in Queen Anne's time, were called *Whimsicals*; because they were sometimes operated upon by feelings, sometimes by principle. After all, it is very hard that you will not allow an old woman to be as inconsistent in her political sentiments, as mankind in general show themselves in all the various courses of life; since you cannot point out one

of them in which the passions and prejudices of those who pursue it are not perpetually carrying us away from the path which our reason points out."

"True, aunt; but you are a wilful wanderer, who should be forced back into the right path."

"Spare me, I entreat you," replied Aunt Margaret. "You remember the Gaelic song, though I dare say I mispronounce the words—

Hatil mohatil, na dowski mi.

I am asleep, do not waken me.

I tell you, kinsman, that the sort of waking dreams which my imagination spins out, in what your favourite Wordsworth calls 'moods of my own mind,' are worth all the rest of my more active days. Then, instead of looking forwards, as I did in youth, and forming for myself fairy palaces, upon the verge of the grave, I turn my eyes backward upon the days and manners of my better time; and the sad, yet soothing recollections, come so close and interesting, that I almost think it sacrilege to be wiser or more rational, or less prejudiced, than those to whom I looked up in my younger years."

"I think I now understand what you mean," I answered, "and can comprehend why you

should occasionally prefer the twilight of illusion to the steady light of reason."

"Where there is no task," she rejoined, "to be performed, we may sit in the dark if we like it—if we go to work, we must ring for candles."

"And amidst such shadowy and doubtful light," continued I, "imagination frames her enchanted and enchanting visions, and sometimes passes them upon the senses for reality."

"Yes," said Aunt Margaret, who is a well-read woman, "to those who resemble the translator of Tasso,

Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
Believed the magic wonders which he sung.

It is not required, for this purpose, that you should be sensible of the painful horrors, which an actual belief in such prodigies inflicts—such a belief, now-a-days, belongs only to fools and children; it is not necessary, that your ears should tingle, and your complexion change, like that of Theodore, at the approach of the spectral huntsman. All that is indispensable for the enjoyment of the milder feeling of supernatural awe is, that you should be susceptible of the slight shuddering which creeps over you, when you hear a tale of terror—that well-vouched tale which the narrator, having first expressed his general disbelief of all such legendary lore, selects and produces, as having

something in it which he has been always obliged to give up as inexplicable. Another symptom is, a momentary hesitation to look round you, when the interest of the narrative is at the highest; and the third, a desire to avoid looking into a mirror, when you are alone in your chamber, for the evening. I mean such are signs which indicate the crisis, when a female imagination is in due temperature to enjoy a ghost story. I do not pretend to describe those which express the same disposition in a gentleman."

"That last symptom, dear aunt, of shunning the mirror, seems likely to be a rare occurrence amongst the fair sex."

"You are a novice in toilet fashions, my dear cousin. All women consult the looking-glass with anxiety before they go into company, but when they return home the mirror has not the same charm. The die has been cast—the party has been successful or unsuccessful, in the impression which she desired to make. But, without going deeper into the mysteries of the dressing-table, I will tell you that I, myself, like many other honest folks, do not like to see the blank black front of a large mirror in a room dimly lighted, and where the reflection of the candle seems rather to lose itself in the deep obscurity of the glass, than to be reflected back again into the apartment. The space of inky darkness seems to be a field for Fancy

to play her revels in. She may call up other features to meet us, instead of the reflection of our own, or, as in the spells of Hallowe'en, which we learned in childhood, some unknown form may be seen peeping over our shoulder. In short, when I am in a ghost-seeing humour, I make my hand-maiden draw the green curtains over the mirror, before I go into the room, so that she may have the first shock of the apparition, if there be any to be seen. But to tell you the truth, this dislike to look into a mirror in particular times and places has, I believe, its original foundation in a story, which came to me by tradition from my grandmother, who was a party concerned in the scene of which I will now tell you."

You are fond (said my aunt) of sketches of the society which has passed away. I wish I could describe to you Sir Philip Forester, the "chartered libertine" of Scottish good company, about the end of the last century. I never saw him, indeed, but my mother's traditions were full of his wit, gallantry, and dissipation. This gay knight flourished about the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century. He was the Sir Charles Easy and the Lovelace of his day and country; renowned for the number of duels he had fought, and the successful intrigues which he had carried on. The supremacy which he had attained in the fashionable world was absolute; and when

we combine it with one or two anecdotes, for which, "if laws were made for every degree," he ought certainly to have been hanged, the popularity of such a person really serves to show, either that the present times are much more decent, if not more virtuous, than they formerly were; or, that high breeding then was of more difficult attainment than that which is now so called; and, consequently, entitled the successful professor to a proportional degree of plenary indulgences and privileges. No beau of this day could have borne out so ugly a story as that of pretty Peggy Grindstone, the miller's daughter at Sillermills—it had well nigh made work for the Lord Advocate. But it hurt Sir Philip Forester no more than the hail hurts the hearth-stone. He was as well received in society as ever, and dined with the Duke of A———the day the poor girl was buried. She died of heart-break. But that has nothing to do with my story.

Now, you must listen to a single word upon kith, kin, and ally; I promise you I will not be prolix. But it is necessary to the authenticity of my legend, that you should know that Sir Philip Forester, with his handsome person, elegant accomplishments, and fashionable manners, married the younger Miss Falconer, of King's Copland. The elder sister of this lady had previously become the wife of my grandfather, Sir Geoffrey Bothwell, and

brought into our family a good fortune. Miss Jemima, or Miss Jemmie Falconer, as she was usually called, had also about ten thousand pounds sterling; then thought a very handsome portion indeed.

The two sisters were extremely different, though each had their admirers while they remained single. Lady Bothwell had some touch of the old King's Copland blood about her. She was bold, though not to the degree of audacity; ambitious, and desirous to raise her house and family; and was, as has been said, a considerable spur to my grandfather, who was otherwise an indolent man; but whom, unless he has been slandered, his lady's influence involved in some political matters which had been more wisely let alone. She was a woman of high principle, however, and masculine good sense, as some of her letters testify, which are still in my wainscot cabinet.

Jemmie Falconer was the reverse of her sister in every respect. Her understanding did not reach above the ordinary pitch, if, indeed, she could be said to have attained it. Her beauty, while it lasted, consisted, in a great measure, of delicacy of complexion and regularity of features, without any peculiar force of expression.—Even these charms faded under the sufferings attendant on an ill-sorted match. She was passionately attached to her husband, by whom she was treated with a

callous, yet polite, indifference; which to one whose heart was as tender as her judgment was weak, was more painful perhaps than absolute ill usage. Sir Philip was a voluptuary, that is, a completely selfish egotist; whose disposition and character resembled the rapier he wore, polished, keen, and brilliant, but inflexible and unpitying. As he observed carefully all the usual forms towards his lady, he had the heart to deprive her even of the compassion of the world; and useless and unavailing as that may be while actually possessed by the sufferer, it is, to a mind like Lady Forester's, most painful to know she has it not.

The tattle of society did its best to place the peccant husband above the suffering wife. Some called her a poor spiritless thing, and declared, that with a little of her sister's spirit she might have brought to reason any Sir Philip whatsoever, were it the termagant Falconbridge himself. But the greater part of their acquaintance affected candour, and saw faults on both sides; though in fact there only existed the oppressor and the oppressed. The tone of such critics was, «To be sure, no one will justify Sir Philip Forester, but then we all know Sir Philip, and Jemmie Falconer might have known what she had to expect from the beginning.—What made her set her cap at Sir Philip?—He would never have looked at her if she had not thrown

herself at his head, with her poor ten thousand pounds. I am sure if it is money he wanted, she ^{overdone} spoiled his ^{market}. I know where Sir Philip could have done much better.—And then, if she *would* have the man, could not she try to make him more comfortable at home, and have his friends oftener, and not plague him with the ^{loud squalling} children, and take care all was handsome and in good style about the house? I declare I think Sir Philip would have made a very domestic man, with a woman who knew how to manage him. »

Now these fair critics, in raising their profound edifice of domestic felicity, did not recollect that the corner-stone was wanting; and that to receive good company with good cheer, the means of the banquet ought to have been furnished by Sir Philip, whose income (dilapidated as it was) was not equal to the display of the hospitality required, and at the same time to the supply of the good knight's *menus plaisirs*. So, in spite of all that was so sagely suggested by female friends, Sir Philip carried his good humour every where abroad, and left at home a solitary mansion and a pining spouse.

At length, inconvenienced in his money affairs, and tired even of the short time which he spent in his own dull house, Sir Philip Forester determined to take a trip to the continent, in the capacity of a volunteer. It was

then common for men of fashion to do so : and our knight perhaps was of opinion that a touch of the military character, just enough to exalt, but not render pedantic, his qualities as a *beau garçon*, was necessary to maintain possession of the elevated situation which he held in the ranks of fashion.

Sir Philip's resolution threw his wife into the agonies of terror; by which the worthy baronet was so much annoyed, that, contrary to his wont, he took some trouble to soothe her apprehensions; and once more brought her to shed tears, in which sorrow was not altogether unmingled with pleasure. Lady Bothwell asked, as a favour, Sir Philip's permission to receive her sister and her family into her own house during his absence on the continent. Sir Philip readily assented to a proposition which saved expense, silenced the foolish people who might have talked of a deserted wife and family, and gratified Lady Bothwell, for whom he felt some respect, as for one who often spoke to him, always with freedom, and sometimes with severity, without being deterred either by his raillery or the *prestige* of his reputation.

A day or two before Sir Philip's departure, Lady Bothwell took the liberty of asking him, in her sister's presence, the direct question, which his timid wife had often desired, but never ventured, to put to him.

« Pray, Sir Philip, what route do you take when you reach the continent? »

« I go from Leith to Helvoet by a packet with advices. »

« That I comprehend perfectly, » said Lady Bothwell drily : « but you do not mean to remain long at Helvoet, I presume, and I should like to know what is your next object? »

« You ask me, my dear lady, » answered Sir Philip, « a question which I have not dared to ask myself. The answer depends on the fate of war. I shall, of course, go to head-quarters, wherever they may happen to be for the time : deliver my letters of introduction ; learn as much of the noble art of war as may suffice a poor interloping amateur, and then take a glance at the sort of thing of which we read so much in the Gazette. »

« And I trust, Sir Philip, » said Lady Bothwell, « that you will remember that you are a husband and a father : and that though you think fit to indulge this military fancy, you will not let it hurry you into dangers which it is certainly unnecessary for any save professional persons to encounter. »

« Lady Bothwell does me too much honour, » said the adventurous knight, « in regarding such a circumstance with the slightest interest. But to soothe your flattering anxiety, I trust your ladyship will recollect that I cannot expose to hazard the venerable and paternal cha-

racter which you so obligingly recommend to my protection, without putting in some peril an honest fellow, called Philip Forester, with whom I have kept company for thirty years, and with whom, though some folks consider him a coxcomb, I have not the least desire to part."

"Well, Sir Philip, you are the best judge of your own affairs: I have little right to interfere—you are not my husband."

"God forbid!" said Sir Philip hastily; instantly adding, however, "God forbid that I should deprive my friend Sir Geoffrey of so inestimable a treasure."

"But you are my sister's husband," replied the lady, "and I suppose you are aware of her present distress of mind——"

"If hearing of nothing else from morning to night can make me aware of it," said Sir Philip, "I should know something of the matter."

"I do not pretend to reply to your wit, Sir Philip," answered Lady Bothwell; "but you must be sensible that all this distress is on account of apprehensions for your personal safety."

"In that case I am surprised that Lady Bothwell, at least, should give herself so much trouble upon so insignificant a subject."

"My sister's interest may account for my being anxious to learn something of Sir Philip Forester's motions; about which otherwise, I

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know, he would not wish me to concern myself; I have a brother's safety too to be anxious for."

"You mean Major Falconer, your brother by the mother's side. What can he possibly have to do with our present agreeable conversation?"

"You have had words together, Sir Philip," said Lady Bothwell.

"Naturally: we are connexions," replied Sir Philip, "and as such have always had the usual intercourse."

"That is an evasion of the subject," answered the lady. "By words, I mean angry words, on the subject of your usage of your wife."

"If," replied Sir Philip Forester, "you suppose Major Falconer simple enough to intrude his advice upon me, Lady Bothwell, in my domestic matters, you are indeed warranted in believing that I might possibly be so far displeased with the interference, as to request him to reserve his advice till it was asked."

"And being on these terms, you are going to join the very army in which my brother Falconer is now serving."

"No man knows the path of honour better than Major Falconer," said Sir Philip. "An aspirant after fame, like me, cannot chuse a better guide than his footsteps."

Lady Bothwell rose and went to the window, the tears gushing from her eyes.

“ And this heartless raillery,” she said, “ is all the consideration that is to be given to our apprehensions of a quarrel which may bring on the most terrible consequences? Good God! of what can men’s hearts be made, who can thus dally with the agony of others?”

Sir Philip Forester was moved; he laid aside the mocking tone in which he had hitherto spoken.

“ Dear Lady Bothwell,” he said, taking her reluctant hand, “ we are both wrong:—you are too deeply serious; I, perhaps, too little so. The dispute I had with Major Falconer was of no earthly consequence. Had any thing occurred betwixt us that ought to have been settled *par voie de fait*, as we say in France, neither of us are persons that are likely to postpone such a meeting. Permit me to say, that, were it generally known that you or my Lady Forester are apprehensive of such a catastrophe, it might be the very means of bringing about what would not otherwise be likely to happen. I know your good sense, Lady Bothwell, and that you will understand me when I say, that really my affairs require my absence for some months;—this Jemima cannot understand; it is a perpetual recurrence of questions, why can you not do this, or that, or the third thing; and when you have proved to her that her expedients are totally ineffectual, you have just to begin the whole round again. Now, do

you tell her, dear Lady Bothwell, that *you* are satisfied.—She is, you must confess, one of those persons with whom authority goes farther than reasoning. Do but repose a little confidence in me, and you shall see how amply I will repay it.”

Lady Bothwell shook her head, as one but half satisfied. “How difficult it is to extend confidence, when the basis on which it ought to rest has been so much shaken! But I will do my best to make Jemima easy; and farther, I can only say, that for keeping your present purpose I hold you responsible both to God and man.”

“Do not fear that I will deceive you,” said Sir Philip; “the safest conveyance to me will be through the general post-office, Helvoetsluys, where I will take care to leave orders for forwarding my letters. As for Falconer, our only encounter will be over a bottle of Burgundy; so make yourself perfectly easy on his score.”

Lady Bothwell could *not* make herself easy; yet she was sensible that her sister hurt her own cause by *taking on*, as the maid-servants call it, too vehemently; and by showing before every stranger, by manner, and sometimes by words also, a dissatisfaction with her husband's journey, that was sure to come to his ears, and equally certain to displease him. But there was no help for this domestic dissension,

which ended only with the day of separation.

I am sorry I cannot tell, with precision, the year in which Sir Philip Forester went over to Flanders; but it was one of those in which the campaign opened with extraordinary fury; and many bloody, though indecisive skirmishes were fought between the French on the one side, and the allies on the other. In all our modern improvements there are none, perhaps, greater than in the accuracy and speed with which intelligence is transmitted from any scene of action to those in this country whom it may concern. During Marlborough's campaigns, the sufferings of the many who had relations in, or along with, the army, were greatly augmented by the suspense in which they were detained for weeks, after they had heard of bloody battles, in which, in all probability, those for whom their bosoms throbbed with anxiety had been personally engaged. Among those who were most agonised by this state of uncertainty was the, I had almost said deserted, wife of the gay Sir Philip Forester. A single letter had informed her of his arrival on the Continent—no others were received. One notice occurred in the newspapers, in which volunteer Sir Philip Forester was mentioned as having been entrusted with a dangerous reconnoissance, which he had executed with the greatest courage, dexterity, and intel-

ligence, and received the thanks of the commanding officer. The sense of his having acquired distinction brought a momentary glow into the lady's pale cheek; but it was instantly lost in ashen whiteness at the recollection of his danger. After this they had no news whatever, neither from Sir Philip, nor even from their brother Falconer. The case of Lady Forester was not indeed different from that of hundreds in the same situation; but a feeble mind is necessarily an irritable one, and the suspense which some bear with constitutional indifference or philosophical resignation, and some with a disposition to believe and hope the best, was intolerable to Lady Forester, at once solitary and sensitive, low-spirited, and devoid of strength of mind, whether natural or acquired.

As she received no further news of Sir Philip, whether directly or indirectly, his unfortunate lady began now to feel a sort of consolation, even in those careless habits which had so often given her pain. "He is so thoughtless," she repeated a hundred times a-day to her sister, "he never writes when things are going on smoothly; it is his way; had any thing happened he would have informed us."

Lady Bothwell listened to her sister without attempting to console her. Probably she might be of opinion that even the worst intelligence which could be received from Flanders might

not be without some touch of consolation; and that the Dowager Lady Forester, if so she was doomed to be called, might have a source of happiness unknown to the wife of the gayest and finest gentleman in Scotland. This conviction became stronger as they learned from inquiries made at head-quarters, that Sir Philip was no longer with the army; though whether he had been taken or slain in some of those skirmishes which were perpetually occurring, and in which he loved to distinguish himself, or whether he had, from some unknown reason, or capricious change of mind, voluntarily left the service, none of his countrymen in the camp of the allies could form even a conjecture. Meantime his creditors at home became clamorous, entered into possession of his property, and threatened his person, should he be rash enough to return to Scotland.—These additional disadvantages aggravated Lady Bothwell's displeasure against the fugitive husband; while her sister saw nothing in any of them, save what tended to increase her grief for the absence of him whom her imagination now represented—as it had before marriage—gallant, gay, and affectionate.

About this period there appeared in Edinburgh a man of singular appearance and pretensions. He was commonly called the Paduan Doctor, from having received his

education at that famous university. He was supposed to possess some rare receipts in medicine, with which, it was affirmed, he had wrought some remarkable cures. But though, on the one hand, the physicians of Edinburgh termed him an empiric, there were many persons, and among them some of the clergy, who, while they admitted the truth of the cures and the force of his remedies, alleged that Doctor Baptista Damioti made use of charms and unlawful arts in order to obtain success in his practice. The resorting to him was even solemnly preached against, as a seeking of health from idols, and a trusting to the help which was to come from Egypt. But the protection which the Paduan doctor received from some friends of interest and consequence, enabled him to set these imputations at defiance, and to ^{assume} assume, even in the city of Edinburgh, famed as it was for abhorrence of witches and necromancers, the dangerous character of an expounder of futurity. It was at length rumoured, that, for a certain gratification, which of course was not an inconsiderable one, Doctor Baptista Damioti could tell the fate of the absent, and even show his visitors the personal form of their absent friends, and the action in which they were engaged at the moment. This rumour came to the ears of Lady Forester, who had reached that pitch of mental

agony in which the sufferer will do any thing, or endure any thing, that suspense may be converted into certainty.

Gentle and timid in most cases, her state of mind made her equally obstinate and reckless, and it was with no small surprise and alarm that her sister, Lady Bothwell, heard her express a resolution to visit this man of art, and learn from him the fate of her husband. Lady Bothwell remonstrated on the improbability that such pretensions as those of this foreigner could be founded in any thing but imposture.

“I care not,” said the deserted wife, “what degree of ridicule I may incur : if there be any one chance out of a hundred that I may obtain some certainty of my husband’s fate, I would not miss that chance for whatever else the world can offer me.”

Lady Bothwell next urged the unlawfulness of resorting to such sources of forbidden knowledge.

“Sister,” replied the sufferer, “he who is dying of thirst cannot refrain from drinking even poisoned water. She who suffers under suspense must seek information, even were the powers which offer it unhallowed and infernal. I go to learn my fate alone : and this very evening will I know it : the sun that rises to-morrow shall find me, if not more happy, at least more resigned.”

“Sister,” said Lady Bothwell, “if you are

determined upon this wild step, you shall not go alone. If this man be an impostor, you may be too much agitated by your feelings to detect his villany. If, which I cannot believe, there be any truth in what he pretends, you shall not be exposed alone to a communication of so extraordinary a nature. I will go with you, if indeed you determine to go. But yet re-consider your project, and renounce inquiries which cannot be prosecuted without guilt, and perhaps without danger."

Lady Forester threw herself into her sister's arms, and clasping her to her bosom, thanked her a hundred times for the offer of her company: while she declined with a melancholy gesture the friendly advice with which it was accompanied.

When the hour of twilight arrived,—which was the period when the Paduan doctor was understood to receive the visits of those who came to consult with him,—the two ladies left their apartments in the Canongate of Edinburgh, having their dress arranged like that of women of an inferior description, and their plaids disposed around their faces as they were worn by the same class: for, in those days of aristocracy, the quality of the wearer was generally indicated by the manner in which her plaid was disposed, as well as by the fineness of its texture. It was Lady Bothwell who had suggested this species of disguise, partly to

avoid observation as they should go to the conjuror's house, and partly in order to make trial of his penetration by appearing before him in a feigned character. Lady Forester's servant, of tried fidelity, had been employed by her to propitiate the doctor by a suitable fee, and a story intimating that a soldier's wife desired to know the fate of her husband : a subject upon which, in all probability, the sage was very frequently consulted.

To the last moment, when the palace clock struck eight, Lady Bothwell earnestly watched her sister, in hopes that she might retreat from her rash undertaking : but as mildness, and even timidity is capable at times of vehement and fixed purposes, she found Lady Forester resolutely unmoved and determined when the moment of departure arrived. Ill satisfied with the expedition, but determined not to leave her sister at such a crisis, Lady Bothwell accompanied Lady Forester through more than one obscure street and lane, the servant walking before and acting as their guide. — At length he suddenly turned into a narrow court, and knocked at an arched door, which seemed to belong to a building of some antiquity. It opened, though no one appeared to act as porter : and the servant, stepping aside from the entrance, motioned the ladies to enter. They had no sooner done so than it shut and excluded their guide. The two ladies

found themselves in a small vestibule, illuminated by a dim lamp, and having, when the door was closed, no communication with the external light or air. The door of an inner apartment, partly open, was at the further side of the vestibule.

« We must not hesitate now, Jemima, » said Lady Bothwell, and walked forwards into the inner room, where, surrounded by books, maps, philosophical utensils, and other implements of peculiar shape and appearance, they found the man of art.

There was nothing very peculiar in the Italian's appearance. He had the dark complexion and marked features of his country, seemed about fifty years old, and was handsomely, but plainly, dressed in a full suit of black clothes, which was then the universal costume of the medical profession. Large wax-lights, in silver sconces, illuminated the apartment, which was reasonably furnished. He rose as the ladies entered : and, notwithstanding the inferiority of their dress, received them with the marked respect due to their quality, and which foreigners are usually punctilious in rendering to those to whom such honours are due.

Lady Bothwell endeavoured to maintain her proposed incognito—and as the doctor ushered them to the upper end of the room, made a motion declining his courtesy, as unfitted for

their condition. « We are poor people, sir, » she said — « only my sister's distress has brought us to consult your worship whether— »

He smiled as he interrupted her—« I am aware, madam, of your sister's distress, and its cause : I am aware, also, that I am honoured with a visit from two ladies of the highest consideration—Lady Bothwell and Lady Forester. If I could not distinguish them from the class of society which their present dress would indicate, there would be small possibility of my being able to gratify them by giving the information which they came to seek. »

« I can easily understand, » said Lady Bothwell—

« Pardon my boldness to interrupt you, milady, » cried the Italian—« your ladyship was about to say, that you could easily understand that I had got possession of your names by means of your domestic. But in thinking so, you do injustice to the fidelity of your servant, and I may add, to the skill of one who is also not less your humble servant—Baptista Dammiotti. »

« I have no intention to do either, sir, » said Lady Bothwell, maintaining a tone of composure, though somewhat surprised — « but the situation is something new to me. If you know who we are, you also know, sir, what brought us here. »

«Curiosity to know the fate of a Scottish gentleman of rank, now or lately upon the continent,» answered the seer—«his name is Il Cavaliere Philippo Forester : a gentleman who has the honour to be husband to this lady, and, with your ladyship's permission for using plain language, the misfortune not to value as it deserves that inestimable advantage. »

Lady Forester sighed deeply, and Lady Bothwell replied—

« Since you know our object without our telling it, the only question that remains is, whether you have the power to relieve my sister's anxiety. »

« I have, madam, » answered the Paduan scholar—« but there is still a previous inquiry. Have you the courage to behold with your own eyes what the Cavaliere Philippo Forester is now doing? or will you take it on my report? »

« That question my sister must answer for herself, » said Lady Bothwell.

« With my own eyes will I endure to see whatever you have power to show me, » said Lady Forester, with the same determined spirit which had stimulated her since her resolution was taken upon this subject.

« There may be danger in it. »

« If gold can compensate the risk, » said Lady Forester, taking out her purse.

« I do not such things for the purpose of gain, » answered the foreigner. « I dare not

turn my art to such a purpose. If I take the gold of the wealthy, it is but to bestow it on the poor: nor do I ever accept more than the sum I have already received from your servant. Put up your purse, madam: an adept needs not your gold.”

Lady Bothwell considering this rejection of her sister's offer as a mere trick of an empiric, to induce her to press a larger sum upon him, and willing that the scene should be commenced and ended, offered some gold in turn, observing that it was only to enlarge the sphere of his charity.

“Let Lady Bothwell enlarge the sphere of her own charity,” said the Paduan, “not merely in giving of alms, in which I know she is not deficient, but in judging the character of others: and let her oblige Baptista Damioti by believing him honest till she shall discover him to be a knave. Do not be surprised, madam, if I speak in answer to your thoughts rather than your expressions, and tell me once more whether you have courage to look on what I am prepared to show?”

“I own, sir,” said Lady Bothwell, “that your words strike me with some sense of fear: but whatever my sister desires to witness I will not shrink from witnessing along with her.”

“Nay, the danger only consists in the risk of your resolution failing you. The sight can only last for the space of seven minutes—and

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should you interrupt the vision by speaking a single word, not only would the charm be broken, but some danger might result to the spectators. But if you can remain steadily silent for the seven minutes, your curiosity will be gratified without the least risk : and for this I will engage my honour. »

Internally Lady Bothwell thought the security was but an indifferent one : but she suppressed the suspicion, as if she had believed that the adept, whose dark features wore a half-formed smile, could in reality read even her most secret reflections. A solemn pause then ensued, until Lady Forester gathered courage enough to reply to the physician, as he termed himself, that she would abide with firmness and silence the sight which he had promised to exhibit to them. Upon this, he made them a low obeisance, and, saying he went to prepare matters to meet their wish, left the apartment. The two sisters, hand in hand, as if seeking by that close union to divert any danger which might threaten them, sat down on two seats in immediate contact with each other : Jemima seeking support in the manly and habitual courage of Lady Bothwell : and she, on the other hand, more agitated than she had expected, endeavouring to fortify herself by the desperate resolution which circumstances had forced her sister to assume. The one perhaps said to herself, that

her sister never feared any thing : and the other might reflect, that what so feeble a minded woman as Jemima did not fear, could not properly be a subject of apprehension to a person of firmness and resolution like her own.

In a few moments the thoughts of both were diverted from their own situation, by a strain of music so singularly sweet and solemn, that, while it seemed calculated to avert or dispel any feeling unconnected with its harmony, increased, at the same time, the solemn excitation which the preceding interview was calculated to produce. The music was that of some instrument with which they were unacquainted : but circumstances afterwards led my ancestress to believe that it was that of the harmonica, which she heard at a much later period in life.

When these heaven-born sounds had ceased, a door opened in the upper end of the apartment, and they saw Damioti standing, at the head of two or three steps, sign to them to advance. His dress was so different from that which he had worn a few minutes before, that they could hardly recognise him ; and the deadly paleness of his countenance, and a certain stern rigidity of muscles, like that of one whose mind is made up to some strange and daring action, had totally changed the somewhat sarcastic expression with which he

had previously regarded them both, and particularly Lady Bothwell. He was barefooted, excepting a species of sandals in the antique fashion; his legs were naked beneath the knee; above them he wore hose, and a doublet of dark crimson silk close to his body; and over that a flowing loose robe, something resembling a surplice, of snow-white linen; his throat and neck were uncovered, and his long, straight, black hair was carefully combed down at full length.

As the ladies approached at his bidding, he showed no gesture of that ceremonious courtesy of which he had been formerly lavish. On the contrary, he made the signal of advance with an air of command; and when, arm in arm, and with insecure steps, the sisters approached the spot where he stood, it was with a warning frown that he pressed his finger to his lips, as if reiterating his condition of absolute silence, while, stalking before them, he led the way into the next apartment.

This was a large room, hung with black, as if for a funeral. At the upper end was a table, or rather a species of altar, covered with the same lugubrious colour, on which lay divers objects resembling the usual implements of sorcery. These objects were not indeed visible as they advanced into the apartment; for the light which displayed them, being only that of two expiring lamps, was extremely

faint.—The master—to use the Italian phrase for persons of this description—approached the upper end of the room, with a genuflexion like that of a Catholic to the crucifix, and at the same time crossed himself. The ladies followed in silence, and arm in arm. Two or three low broad steps led to a platform in front of the altar, or what resembled such. Here the sage took his stand, and placed the ladies beside him, once more earnestly repeating by signs his injunctions of silence. The Italian then, extending his bare arm from under his linen vestment, pointed with his fore-finger to five large flambeaux, or torches, placed on each side of the altar. They took fire successively at the approach of his hand, or rather of his finger, and spread a strong light through the room. By this the visitors could discern that, on the seeming altar, were disposed two naked swords laid crosswise; a large open book, which they conceived to be a copy of the Holy Scriptures, but in a language to them unknown; and beside this mysterious volume was placed a human skull. But what struck the sisters most was a very tall and broad mirror, which occupied all the space behind the altar, and, illuminated by the lighted torches, reflected the mysterious articles which were laid upon it.

The master then placed himself between the two ladies, and, pointing to the mirror, took

each by the hand, but without speaking a syllable. They gazed intently on the polished and sable space to which he had directed their attention. Suddenly the surface assumed a new and singular appearance. It no longer simply reflected the objects placed before it, but, as if it had self-contained scenery of its own, objects began to appear within it, at first in a disorderly, indistinct, and miscellaneous manner, like form arranging itself out of chaos; at length, in distinct and defined shape and symmetry. It was thus that, after some shifting of light and darkness over the face of the wonderful glass, a long perspective of arches and columns began to arrange itself on its sides, and a vaulted roof on the upper part of it: till, after many oscillations, the whole vision gained a fixed and stationary appearance, representing the interior of a foreign church. The pillars were stately, and hung with scutcheons; the arches were lofty and magnificent; the floor was lettered with funeral inscriptions. But there were no separate shrines, no images, no display of chalice or crucifix on the altar. It was, therefore, a Protestant church upon the continent. A clergyman dressed in the Geneva gown and band stood by the communion-table, and, with the Bible opened before him, and his clerk awaiting in the back ground, seemed prepared to perform some service of the church to which he belonged.

At length, there entered the middle aisle of the building a numerous party, which appeared to be a bridal one, as a lady and gentleman walked first, hand in hand, followed by a large concourse of persons of both sexes, gaily, nay richly, attired. The bride, whose features they could distinctly see, seemed not more than sixteen years old, and extremely beautiful. The bridegroom, for some seconds, moved rather with his shoulder towards them, and his face averted : but his elegance of form and step struck the sisters at once with the same apprehension. As he turned his face suddenly, it was frightfully realised, and they saw, in the gay bridegroom before them, Sir Philip Forester. His wife uttered an imperfect exclamation, at the sound of which the whole scene stirred, and seemed to separate.

“ I could compare it to nothing,” said Lady Bothwell, while recounting the wonderful tale, “ but to the dispersion of the reflection offered by a deep and calm pool, when a stone is suddenly cast into it, and the shadows become dissipated and broken.” The master pressed both the ladies’ hands severely, as if to remind them of their promise, and of the danger which they incurred.—The exclamation died away on Lady Forester’s tongue, without attaining perfect utterance, and the scene in the glass, after the fluctuation of a minute, again resumed to the eye its former appearance of a real

scene, existing within the mirror, as if represented in a picture, save that the figures were moveable instead of being stationary.

The representation of Sir Philip Forester, now distinctly visible in form and feature, was seen to lead on towards the clergyman that beautiful girl, who advanced at once with diffidence and with a species of affectionate pride. In the mean time, and just as the clergyman had arranged the bridal company before him, and seemed about to commence the service, another group of persons, of whom two or three were officers, entered the church. They moved, at first, forward, as though they came to witness the bridal ceremony, but suddenly one of the officers, whose back was towards the spectators, detached himself from his companions, and rushed hastily towards the marriage party; when the whole of them turned towards him, as if attracted by some exclamation which had accompanied his advance. Suddenly the intruder drew his sword; the bridegroom unsheathed his own, and made towards him;—swords were also drawn by other individuals, both of the marriage party and of those who had last entered. They fell into a sort of confusion, the clergyman, and some elder and graver persons labouring apparently to keep the peace, while the hotter spirits on both sides brandished their weapons. But now, the period of the brief space during which the sooth-

sayer, as he pretended, was permitted to exhibit his art, was arrived. The fumes again mixed together, and dissolved gradually from observation; the vaults and columns of the church rolled asunder, and disappeared; and the front of the mirror reflected nothing save the blazing torches, and the melancholy apparatus placed upon the altar or table before it.

The doctor led the ladies, who greatly required his support, into the apartment from whence they came; where wine, essences, and other means of restoring suspended animation, had been provided during his absence. He motioned them to chairs, which they occupied in silence; Lady Forester, in particular, wringing her hands, and casting her eyes up to heaven, but without speaking a word, as if the spell had been still before her eyes.

“And what we have seen is even now acting?” said Lady Bothwell, collecting herself with difficulty.

“That,” answered Baptista Damiotti, “I cannot justly, or with certainty, say. But it is either now acting, or has been acted during a short space before this. It is the last remarkable transaction in which the cavalier Forester has been engaged.”

Lady Bothwell then expressed anxiety concerning her sister, whose altered countenance, and apparent unconsciousness of what passed

around her, excited her apprehensions how it might be possible to convey her home.

« I have prepared for that, » answered the adept— « I have directed the servant to bring your equipage as near to this place as the narrowness of the street will permit. Fear not for your sister; but give her, when you return home, this composing-draught, and she will be better to-morrow morning. « Few, » he added, in a melancholy tone, « leave this house as well in health as they entered it. Such being the consequence of seeking knowledge by mysterious means, I leave you to judge the condition of those who have the power of gratifying such irregular curiosity. Farewell, and forget not the potion. »

« I will give her nothing that comes from you, » said Lady Bothwell— « I have seen enough of your art already. Perhaps you would poison us both to conceal your own necromancy. But we are persons who want neither the means of making our wrongs known, nor the assistance of friends to right them. »

« You have had no wrongs from me, madam, » said the adept. « You sought one who is little grateful for such honour. He seeks no one, and only gives responses to those who invite and call upon him. After all, you have but learned a little sooner the evil which you must

still be doomed to endure. I hear your servant's step at the door, and will detain your ladyship and Lady Forester no longer. The next packet from the Continent will explain what you have already partly witnessed. Let it not, if I may advise, pass too suddenly into your sister's hands."

So saying, he bid Lady Bothwell good night. She went, lighted by the adept, to the vestibule, where he hastily threw a black cloak over his singular dress, and opening the door, entrusted his visitors to the care of the servant. It was with difficulty that Lady Bothwell sustained her sister to the carriage, though it was only twenty steps distant. When they arrived at home Lady Forester required medical assistance. The physician of the family attended, and shook his head on feeling her pulse.

"Here has been," he said, "a violent and sudden shock on the nerves. I must know how it has happened."

Lady Bothwell admitted they had visited the conjuror, and that Lady Forester had received some bad news respecting her husband, Sir Philip.

"That rascally quack would make my fortune were he to stay in Edinburgh," said the graduate—"this is the seventh nervous case I have heard of his making for me, and all by effect of terror." He next examined the composing draught which Lady Bothwell had un-

consciously brought in her hand, tasted it, and pronounced it very german to the matter, and what would save an application to the apothecary. He then paused, and looking at Lady Bothwell very significantly, at length added, "I suppose I must not ask your ladyship any thing about this Italian warlock's proceedings?"

"Indeed, doctor," answered Lady Bothwell, "I consider what passed, as confidential; and though the man may be a rogue, yet, as we were fools enough to consult him, we should, I think, be honest enough to keep his counsel."

"*May* be a knave—come," said the doctor, "I am glad to hear your ladyship allows such a possibility in any thing that comes from Italy."

"What comes from Italy may be as good as what comes from Hanover, doctor. But you and I will remain good friends, and that it may be so, we will say nothing of whig and tory."

"Not I," said the doctor, receiving his fee; and taking his hat, "a Carolus serves my purpose as well as a Willielmus. But I should like to know why old Lady Saint Ringan's, and all that set, go about wasting their decayed lungs in puffing this foreign fellow."

"Ay—you had better set him down a Jesuit, as Scrub says."—On these terms they parted.

The poor patient—whose nerves, from an extraordinary state of tension, had at length become relaxed in as extraordinary a degree

—continued to struggle with a sort of imbecility, the growth of superstitious terror, when the shocking tidings were brought from Holland, which fulfilled even her worst expectations.

They were sent by the celebrated Earl of Stair, and contained the melancholy event of a duel betwixt Sir Philip Forester, and his wife's half-brother, Captain Falconer, of the Scotch-Dutch, as they were then called, in which the latter had been killed. The cause of quarrel rendered the incident still more shocking. It seemed that Sir Philip had left the army suddenly, in consequence of being unable to pay a very considerable sum, which he had lost to another volunteer at play. He had changed his name, and taken up his residence at Rotterdam, where he had insinuated himself into the good graces of an ancient and rich burgomaster, and by his handsome person and graceful manners captivated the affections of his only child, a very young person of great beauty, and the heiress of much wealth. Delighted with the specious attractions of his proposed son-in-law, the wealthy merchant—whose idea of the British character was too high to admit of his taking any precaution to acquire evidence of his condition and circumstances—gave his consent to the marriage. It was about to be celebrated in the principal

church of the city, when it was interrupted by a singular occurrence.

Captain Falconer having been detached, at Rotterdam, to bring up a part of the brigade of Scottish auxiliaries, who were in quarters there, a person of consideration in the town, to whom he had been formerly known, proposed to him for amusement to go to the high church, to see a countryman of his own married to the daughter of a wealthy burgomaster. Captain Falconer went accordingly, accompanied by his Dutch acquaintance, with a party of his friends, and two or three officers of the Scotch brigade.—His astonishment may be conceived when he saw his own brother-in-law, a married man, on the point of leading to the altar the innocent and beautiful creature, on whom he was about to practise a base and unmanly deceit. He proclaimed his villany on the spot, and the marriage was interrupted of course. But against the opinion of more thinking men, who considered Sir Philip Forester as having thrown himself out of the rank of men of honour, Captain Falconer admitted him to the privileges of such, accepted a challenge from him, and in the rencounter received a mortal wound. Such are the ways of Heaven, mysterious in our eyes. Lady Forester never recovered the shock of this dismal intelligence.

“ And did this tragedy,” said I, “ take place exactly at the time when the scene in the mirror was exhibited ?”

“ It is hard to be obliged to maim one's story,” answered my aunt; “ but to speak the truth, it happened some days sooner than the apparition was exhibited.”

“ And so there remained a possibility,” said I, “ that by some secret and speedy communication the artist might have received early intelligence of that incident.”

“ The incredulous pretended so,” replied my aunt.

“ What became of the adept ?” demanded I.

“ Why, a warrant came down shortly afterwards to arrest him for high-treason, as an agent of the Chevalier Saint George; and Lady Bothwell recollecting the hints which had escaped the doctor, an ardent friend of the Protestant succession, did then call to remembrance that this man was chiefly *proné* among the ancient matrons of her own political persuasion. It certainly seemed probable that intelligence from the continent, which could easily have been transmitted by an active and powerful agent, might have enabled him to prepare such a scene of phantasmagoria as she had herself witnessed. Yet there were so many difficulties in assigning a natural explanation, that, to the day of her death, she remained in great doubt on the subject, and

much disposed to cut the Gordian knot by admitting the existence of supernatural agency.”

“But, my dear aunt,” said I, “what became of the man of skill?”

“Oh, he was too good a fortune-teller not to be able to foresee that his own destiny would be tragical if he waited the arrival of the man with the silver greyhound upon his sleeve. He made, as we say, a moonlight flitting, and was nowhere to be seen or heard of. Some noise there was about papers or letters found in the house, but it died away, and Dr Baptista Damioti was soon as little talked of as Galen or Hippocrates.”

“And Sir Philip Forester,” said I, “did he too vanish for ever from the public scene?”

“No,” replied my kind informer. “He was heard of once more, and it was upon a remarkable occasion. It is said that we Scots, when there was such a nation in existence, have among our full peck of virtues, one or two little barleycorns of vice. In particular, it is alleged that we rarely forgive, and never forget, any injuries received; that we used to make an idol of our resentment, as poor Lady Constance did of her grief; and are addicted, as Burns says, to ‘Nursing our wrath to keep it warm.’ Lady Bothwell was not without this feeling; and, I believe, nothing whatever, scarce the restoration of the Stuart line, could have happened so delicious to her feelings as

an opportunity of being revenged on Sir Philip Forester for the deep and double injury which had deprived her of a sister and of a brother. But nothing of him was heard or known till many a year had passed away."

At length—it was on a Fastern's E'en (Shrove-tide) assembly, at which the whole fashion of Edinburgh attended, full and frequent, and when Lady Bothwell had a seat amongst the lady patronesses, that one of the attendants on the company whispered into her ear, that a gentleman wished to speak with her in private.

"In private? and in an assembly-room?—he must be mad;—tell him to call upon me to-morrow morning."

"I said so, my lady," answered the man—
"but he desired me to give you this paper."

She undid the billet, which was curiously folded and sealed. It only bore the words, "*On business of life and death,*" written in a hand which she had never seen before. Suddenly it occurred to her that it might concern the safety of some of her political friends; she therefore followed the messenger to a small apartment where the refreshments were prepared, and from which the general company was excluded. She found an old man, who at her approach rose up and bowed profoundly. His appearance indicated a broken constitution, and his dress, though sedulously rendered conforming to the etiquette of a ball-room, was

worn and tarnished, and hung in folds about his emaciated person. Lady Bothwell was about to feel for her purse, expecting to get rid of the suppliant at the expense of a little money, but some fear of a mistake arrested her purpose. She therefore gave the man leisure to explain himself.

«I have the honour to speak with the Lady Bothwell?»

«I am Lady Bothwell : allow me to say that this is no time or place for long explanations. What are your commands with me?»

«Your Ladyship,» said the old man, «had once a sister.»

«True : whom I loved as my own soul.»

«And a brother.»

«The bravest, the kindest, the most affectionate,» said Lady Bothwell.

«Both these beloved relatives you lost by the fault of an unfortunate man,» continued the stranger.

«By the crime of an unnatural, bloody-minded murderer,» said the lady.

«I am answered,» replied the old man, bowing, as if to withdraw.

«Stop, Sir, I command you,» said Lady Bothwell. «Who are you, that, at such a place and time, come to recal these horrible recollections? I insist upon knowing.»

«I am one who means Lady Bothwell no injury : but, on the contrary, to offer her the

means of doing a deed of Christian charity which the world would wonder at, and which Heaven would reward : but I find her in no temper for such a sacrifice as I was prepared to ask.”

“Speak out, Sir : what is your meaning?” said Lady Bothwell.

“The wretch that has wronged you so deeply,” rejoined the stranger, “is now on his death-bed. His days have been days of misery, his nights have been sleepless hours of anguish—yet he cannot die without your forgiveness. His life has been an unremitting penance—yet he dares not part from his burthen while your curses load his soul.”

“Tell him,” said Lady Bothwell sternly, “to ask pardon of that Being whom he has so greatly offended : not of an erring mortal like himself. What could my forgiveness avail him?”

“Much,” answered the old man. “It will be an earnest of that which he may then venture to ask from his Creator, lady, and from yours. Remember, Lady Bothwell, you too have a death-bed to look forward to : your soul may, all human souls must, feel the awe of facing the judgment-seat, with the wounds of an untented conscience, raw, and rankling—what thought would it be then that should whisper, ‘I have given no mercy, how then shall I ask it?’”

“Man, whosoever thou mayst be,” replied Lady Bothwell,—“urge me not so cruelly. It would be but blasphemous hypocrisy to utter with my lips the words which every throb of my heart protests against. They would open the earth and give to light the wasted form of my sister—the bloody form of my murdered brother.—Forgive him!—Never, never!”

“Great God!” cried the old man, holding up his hands: “is it thus the worms which thou hast called out of dust obey the commands of their Maker? Farewell, proud and unforgiving woman. Exult that thou hast added to a death in want and pain the agonies of religious despair: but never again mock Heaven by petitioning for the pardon which thou hast refused to grant.”

He was turning from her,

“Stop,” she exclaimed—“I will try: yes, I will try to pardon him.”

“Gracious lady,” said the old man, “you will relieve the overburdened soul which dare not sever itself from its sinful companion of earth without being at peace with you. What do I know—your forgiveness may perhaps preserve for penitence the dregs of a wretched life.”

“Ha!” said the lady, as a sudden light broke on her, “it is the villain himself.” And grasping Sir Philip Forester, for it was he, and no

other, by the collar, she raised a cry of "Murder, murder! seize the murderer!"

At an exclamation so singular, in such a place, the company thronged into the apartment, but Sir Philip Forester was no longer there. He had forcibly extricated himself from Lady Bothwell's hold, and had run out of the apartment which opened on the landing-place of the stair. There seemed no escape in that direction, for there were several persons coming up the steps, and others descending. But the unfortunate man was desperate. He threw himself over the balustrade, and alighted safely in the lobby, though a leap of fifteen feet at least, then dashed into the street, and was lost in darkness. Some of the Bothwell family made pursuit, and had they come up with the fugitive they might have perhaps slain him : for in those days men's blood ran warm in their veins. But the police did not interfere : the matter most criminal having happened long since, and in a foreign land. Indeed it was always thought that this extraordinary scene originated in a hypocritical experiment, by which Sir Philip desired to ascertain whether he might return to his native country in safety from the resentment of a family which he had injured so very deeply. As the result fell out so contrary to his wishes, he is believed to have returned to the continent, and there died in exile. So closed the tale of the MYSTERIOUS MIRROR.

PHANTASMAGORIA.

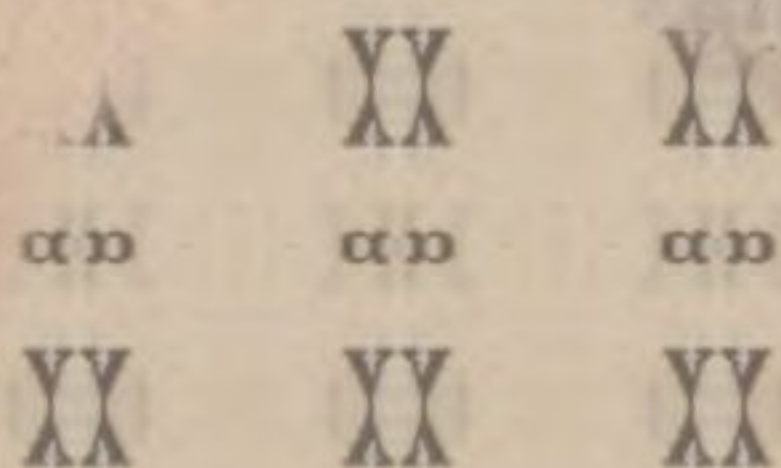
TO THE VEILED CONDUCTOR OF BLACKWOOD'S
MAGAZINE.

SIR—There are few things so much affected by the change of manners and circumstances, as the quality and the effect of evidence. Facts which our fathers were prepared to receive upon very slender and hearsay testimony, we are sometimes disposed to deny positively, even when fortified by all that the laws of evidence can do for them, by the confession of the perpetrator of wickedness, by the evidence of its victims, by the eye-sight and oath of impartial witnesses, and by all which could, in an ordinary case, “make faith,” to use a phrase of the civilians, betwixt man and man. In the present day he would be hooted as an idiot, who would believe an old woman guilty of witchcraft upon evidence, on the tenth part of which a Middlesex jury would find a man guilty of felony; and our ancestors would have

pelted, as a Sadducee and an infidel, any one who, on the twentieth degree of testimony so rejected, would not have condemned the accused to faggots and tarred barrels.

To accommodate those who love the golden mean in judgment, or are inclined, with Giles Passamonte's ape, to pronounce the adventures in Montosinos's cave partly true and partly false, Dr Ferriar of Manchester has invented a new mode of judging evidence with respect to those supernatural matters, in which, without impeaching the truth of the narrator, or even the veracity of the eyes to whose evidence he appeals, you may ascribe his supposed facts to the effects of preconceived ideas acting upon faulty or diseased organs.

I have, Sir, unfortunately no means of making myself the head of any new class of believers or infidels upon these mysterious points; for it is evident, that narrations of this marvellous complexion must be either true or false, or partly true, partly fictitious; and each of these classes have already their leaders and patrons. As, however, you, Sir, are yourself a mystical being, and, in the opinion of some, a nonentity, you cannot fail to be interested in examples referring to the mystical, and to that which, being hard of belief, is sometimes rejected as incredible. You are not, perhaps, being yourself a reserved personage, entitled to expect ample communication on the part of your



correspondents; yet this much I am willing to announce to you, as the preface to the present and future correspondence.

My father, Sir Michaelmas Shadow, lived in a glen, into which the sun does not shine above ten times a year, though we have no reason to complain of want of moisture. He was wont to say, that he was descended from the celebrated Simon Shadow, whom the renowned Sir John Falstaff desired to have in his regiment, in respect he was like to be a cool soldier, and refreshing to sit under after a hot day's march. My father abridged his days by venturing out into the meridian sun (an hour remarkable for cutting short our family), with the purpose of paying his respects to an eclipse, which a rascally almanack-maker falsely announced as being on the point of rendering our globe a visit. I succeeded to him, Sir, in his retired habits, and his taste for the uncertain, undefined, and mysterious. Warned by my poor father's untimely fate, I never venture into broad day-light; but should you, Sir, leave your bower at sun-rise or sunset, like your prototype the veiled prophet of Moore, it is possible that you may meet and distinguish your correspondent by his tall slim figure, thin stilts of legs, and disproportioned feet. For I must inform you, in case of a disagreeable surprise, that my appearance reverses that of Michael Scott and the wizards

of old, from whom the devil is said to have stolen the shadow; whereas, in my case, it would seem he had stolen the substance, and left the shade to walk the earth without it.

My education and reading have been as fantastic as my person; and from a kindred propensity to those stories which, like the farther end of the bridge in Mirza's vision, are concealed by shadows, clouds, and darkness, they have been turned towards the occult sciences and mystical points of study. My library is furnished with authors who treat of the divining-rod, of the magical mirror, the weapon-salve, charms, lamens, sigils, christals, pentacles, talismans, and spells. My hereditary mansion, Castle Shadoway, has a tower, from which I can observe the stars (being something of an astrologer, like the valiant Guy Manner-ing), and a dungeon haunted by the restless ghost of a cooper, whilome confined there till his death by one of my ancestors, for having put two slight hoops on a barrel of March beer, by which the generous liquor was lost. This goblin shall hammer, dub-a-dub, scratch, rustle, and groan with any from the Hermitage Castle to Castle Girnigo, for an hundred pounds down, play or pay. Besides this, I pretend to be acquainted with all spirits that walk the earth, swim the wave, or wing the sky; goblins, night-mares, hags, vampires, break-necks, black men and green women, familiars, puck-

harries, Oberon, and all his moon-light dancers. The wandering Jew, the high-priest of the Rosy-cross, the genius of Socrates, the demon of Mascon, the drummer of Tedworth, are all known to me, with their real character, and essence, and true history. Besides these points of occult knowledge, my conversation has lain much among old spinsters and widows, who pardoned the disproportion between my club-feet and spindle-shanks, and my general resemblance to a skeleton hung in chains, in consideration of my conversational talents as an excellent listener. In this way my mind, from youth upwards, has become stored with matter deep and perilous, to read or narrate which, with due effect, the hand of the clock should point to twelve, and the candles be in the snuff.

The time now approaches, Sir, that I must expect, in the course of nature, to fade away into that unknown and obscure state, in which, as there is no light, there can of course be no shadow. I am unwilling so much current and excellent information should go with me to the darksome bourne. To your veiled and mysterious character, Sir, you are indebted, as I have already hinted, for the preference which I give to your work as the means of recording these marvels. You must not be apprehensive that I will overwhelm you with too many marvels at once; for I am aware, by

experience, of the indigestion which arises after having, like Macbeth, "supp'd full with horrors." Farther, you may place absolute reliance upon the statements which I may give concerning my authorities. Trusting this offer may be acceptable, and that at a time when you are moving heaven and earth for furnishing instruction and amusement to your readers, you will not think the assistance of the inferior regions to be despised, I send you the first article of my treatise, which, with your permission, I entitle

Phantasmagoria.

"Come like shadows—so depart."

The incident which I am about to narrate came to your present correspondent through the most appropriate channel for such information, by the narration, namely, of an old woman. I must, however, add, that though this old lady literally wore the black silk gown, small haunch-hoop, and triple ruffles, which form the apparel most proper to her denomination, yet in sense, spirit, wit, and intelligence, she greatly exceeded various individuals of her own class who have been known to me, although their backs were clothed with purple robes or military uniforms, and their heads attired with cocked hats, or three-tailed

periwigs. I have not, in my own mind, the slightest doubt that she told the tale to me in the precise terms in which she received it from the person principally concerned. Whether it was to be believed in its full extent as a supernatural visitation, she did not pretend to determine; but she strongly averred her conviction, that the lady to whom the event happened was a woman not easily to be imposed upon by her own imagination, however excited; and that the whole tone of her character, as well as the course of her life, exempted her from the slightest suspicion of an attempt to impose on others. Without farther preface, and without any effort at ornament or decoration, I proceed to my narration, only premising, that though I suppress the name of the lady, out of respect to surviving relations, yet it is well known to me.

A lady, wife to a gentleman of respectable property on the borders of Argyleshire, was, about the middle of the last century, left a widow, with the management of an embarrassed estate, and the care of an only son. The young gentleman approached that period of life when it was necessary that he should be sent into the world in some active professional line. The natural inclination of the youth, like most others of that age and country, was to enter into the army, a disposition which his mother saw with anxiety, as all the perils

of the military profession were aggravated to her imagination by maternal tenderness, and a sense of her own desolate situation. A circumstance, however, occurred which induced her to grant her consent to her son's embracing this course of life, with less reluctance than it would otherwise have been given.

A Highland gentleman, named Campbell (we suppress his designation), and nearly related to Mrs ——, was about this time named to the command of one of the independent companies levied for protecting the peace of the Highlands, and preventing the marauding parties in which the youth of the wilder clans were still occasionally exercised. These companies were called *Sidier-dhu*, i. e. black soldiers, to distinguish them from the *Sidier-roy*, or red soldiers of the regular army; and hence, when embodied into a marching regiment (the well known forty-second), the corps long retained, and still retains, the title of the Black Watch. At the period of the story, the independent companies retained their original occupation, and were generally considered as only liable to do duty in their native country. Each of these corps consisted of about three hundred men, using the Highland garb and arms, and commanded by such gentlemen as the Brunswick government imagined they might repose confidence in. They were understood to engage only to serve in the High-

lands, and no where else, and were looked upon rather as a kind of volunteers than as regular soldiers.

A service of this limited nature, which seemed to involve but little risk of actual danger, and which was to be exercised in his native country alone, was calculated to remove many of the objections which a beloved mother might be supposed to have against her only son entering into the army. She had also the highest reliance on the kindness and affection of her kinsman, Captain Campbell, who, while he offered to receive the young gentleman as a cadet into his independent company, gave her his solemn assurance to watch over him in every respect as his own son, and to prevent his being exposed to any unnecessary hazard until he should have attained the age and experience necessary for his own guidance. Mrs ——, being greatly reconciled to parting with her son, in consequence of these friendly assurances on the part of his future commander, it was arranged that the youth should join the company at a particular time; and in the mean while, Mrs——, who was then residing at Edinburgh, made the necessary preparations for his proper equipment.

These had been nearly completed, when Mrs——received a piece of melancholy intelligence, which again unsettled her resolution; and while it filled her with grief on account of

her relation, awakened in the most cruel manner all the doubts and apprehensions which his promises had lulled to sleep. A body of Katerns, or freebooters, belonging, if I mistake not, to the country of Lochiel, had made a descent upon a neighbouring district of Argyleshire, and driven away a considerable *creagh* or spoil of cattle. Captain Campbell, with such of his independent company as he could assemble upon a sudden alarm, set off in pursuit of the depredators, and after a fatiguing march came up with them. A slight skirmish took place, in course of which the cattle were recovered, but not before Captain Campbell had received a severe wound. It was not immediately, perhaps not necessarily, mortal, but was rendered so by want of shelter and surgical assistance; and the same account which brought to Edinburgh an account of the skirmish, communicated to Mrs —— the death of her affectionate kinsman. To grief for his loss, she had now to add the painful recollection, that her son, if he pursued the line which had been resolved on, would be deprived of the aid, countenance, and advice, of the person to whose care, as to that of a father, she had resolved to confide him. And the very event, which was otherwise so much attended with grief and perplexity, served to show that the service of the independent companies,

however limited in extent, did not exempt those engaged in it from mortal peril. At the same time, there were many arguments against retracting her consent, or altering a plan in which so much progress had been already made; and she felt as if, on the one hand, she sacrificed her son's life if she permitted him to join the corps; on the other, that his honour or spirit might be called in question by her obliging him to renounce the situation. These contending emotions threw her—a widow, with no one to advise her, and the mother of an only son, whose fate depended upon her resolving wisely—into an agony of mind, which many readers may suppose will account satisfactorily for the following extraordinary apparition.

I need not remind my Edinburgh friends, that in ancient times their forefathers lived, as they do still in Paris, in *flats*, which have access by a common stair. The apartments occupied by Mrs — — were immediately above those of a family with whom she was intimate, and she was in the habit of drinking tea with them every evening. It was duskish, and she began to think that her agitation of mind had detained her beyond the hour at which she should have joined her friends, when opening the door of her little parlour to leave her own lodging, she saw standing directly opposite to

her in the passage the exact resemblance of Captain Campbell, in his complete Highland dress, with belted plaid, dirk, pistols, pouch, and broad-sword. Appalled at this vision, she started back, closed the door of the room, staggered backwards to a chair, and endeavoured to convince herself that the apparition she had seen was only the effect of a heated imagination. In this, being a woman of a strong mind, she partly succeeded, yet could not prevail upon herself again to open the door which seemed to divide her from the shade of her deceased relation, until she heard a tap on the floor beneath, which was the usual signal from her friendly neighbours to summon her to tea. On this she took courage, walked firmly to the door of the apartment, flung it open, and—again beheld the military spectre of the deceased officer of the Black Watch. He seemed to stand within a yard of her, and held his hand stretched out, not in a menacing manner, but as if to prevent her passing him. This was too much for human fortitude to endure, and she sunk down on the floor, with a noise which alarmed her friends below for her safety.

On their hastening up stairs, and entering Mrs — —'s lodging, they saw nothing extraordinary in the passage, but in the parlour found the lady in strong hysterics. She was

recalled to herself with difficulty, but concealed the extraordinary cause of her indisposition. Her friends naturally imputed it to the late unpleasant intelligence from Argyleshire, and remained with her till a late hour endeavouring to amuse and relieve her mind. The hour of rest, however, arrived, and there was a necessity (which Mrs —— felt an alarming one) that she should go to her solitary apartment. She had scarce set down the light which she held in her hand, and was in the act of composing her mind, ere addressing the Deity for protection during the perils of the night, when, turning her head, the vision she had seen in the passage was standing in the apartment. On this emergency she summoned up her courage, and addressing him by his name and surname, conjured him in the name of Heaven to tell her wherefore he thus haunted her. The apparition instantly answered, with a voice and manner in no respect differing from those proper to him while alive, “Cousin, why did you not speak sooner, — my visit is but for your good, — your grief disturbs me in my grave, — and it is by permission of the Father of the fatherless and Husband of the widow, that I come to tell you not to be disheartened by my fate, but to pursue the line which, by my advice, you adopted for your son. He will find a protector more efficient and as kind as

I would have been; will rise high in the military profession, and live to close your eyes.” With these words, the figure representing Captain Campbell completely vanished.

Upon the point of her being decidedly awake and sensible, through her eyes and ears, of the presence and words of this apparition, Mrs ——— declared herself perfectly convinced. She said, when minutely questioned by the lady who told me the story, that his general appearance differed in no respect from that which he presented when in full life and health; but that in the last occasion, while she fixed her eyes on the spectre in terror and anxiety, yet with a curiosity which argued her to be somewhat familiarized with his presence, she observed a speck or two of blood upon his breast, ruffle, and band, which he seemed to conceal with his hand when he observed her looking at him. He changed his attitude more than once, but slightly, and without altering his general position.

The fate of the young gentleman in future life seemed to correspond with the prophecy. He entered the army, rose to considerable rank, and died in peace and honour, long after he had closed the eyes of the good old lady, who had determined, or at least professed to have determined, his destination in life upon this marvellous suggestion.

It would have been easy for a skilful narrator to give this tale more effect, by a slight transference or trifling exaggeration of the circumstances. But the author has determined in this and future communications to limit himself strictly to his authorities, and rests
your humble servant,

SIMON SHADOW.

ABSTRACT

OF THE

EYRBIGGIA-SAGA;

BEING THE EARLY ANNALS OF THAT DISTRICT OF
ICELAND LYING AROUND THE PROMONTORY
CALLED SNÆFELLS.

[This article appeared in a work entitled *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, published under the charge of two distinguished Antiquaries, Robert Jamieson, Esquire, of Edinburgh, and the late Henry Weber. The extremely curious information, on the subject of Scandinavian Antiquities, which the volume contains (it will be easily supposed the author is not speaking of his own slight share in it), deserved a better reception than it met with, as the public gave no encouragement to continue the work.]

Of the various records of Icelandic history and literature, there is none more interesting than the *Eyrbiggia-Saga*, composed (as has been conjectured by the learned Thorkelin) before the year 1264, when Iceland was still subject

In the year of God 883, a Norwegian nobleman, named Biorn, having been declared an exile by Harold, King of Norway, had recourse to the protection of Rolf, or Rollo, who united the qualities of a priest and a warrior, and kept the temple of Thor in the Island of Mes-tur. Biorn was kindly received, and furnished with a vessel to pursue his fortune in the spring. But finding that by this proceeding he had incurred the resentment of Harold, Rolf, or, as he was called from his sacred office, Thorolf (quasi Thor's-Rolf), resolved to abandon his habitation and to set sail for Iceland, where, ten years before, a colony had been settled by Ingolf, the son of Arne. Thorolf made a very great sacrifice to Thor preparatory to his departure; and having received, or fabricated, an oracle authorizing his change of residence, he set sail, carrying with him the earth upon which the throne of Thor had been placed, the image of the Mace-Bearer itself, and the wooden work of his temple.

When the vessel of the adventurer approached Iceland, Thorolf cast the columns of the idol's sanctuary into the sea, and declared his purpose of establishing his new residence wherever they should be thrown on shore. Chance, and the current of the tides, directed the pillars to a promontory or peninsula, called from that circumstance Thorsness.¹ Here,

¹ Thorsness seems to have been that small peninsula *

therefore, Thorolf established himself and his followers, and, mindful of his tutelar deity, erected a temple for Thor, the ample scale of which testified the zeal of his devotion. An inner sanctuary contained the altar of the deity, on which was placed a silver ring, weighing two ounces, which was used in the ministration of every solemn oath, and which decorated the person of the priest of Thor upon all occasions of public meeting. Here also was deposited the vessel which contained the blood of the sacrifices, and the sacred implement for sprinkling it upon the altar and the worshippers. Idols, representing the various deities of Scandinavian mythology, were placed around the altar, and a tax was imposed upon all the settlers for the maintenance of the solemn rites and sacrifices by which they were to be propitiated; Thorolf reserving to himself the office of high-priest, with the duty of maintaining the temple and superintending the ritual.

A series of curious ordinances marked the foundation and extent of his authority. The mentioned by Sir George Mackenzie in his Survey of the Goldbringe Sysell of Iceland, which is itself a huge indented promontory on the south-western coast of that island. Near the peninsula the travellers saw the Helgafels, on which there is still a small hamlet, which, they observe, derives its name from the superstitious usages with which it was anciently connected. — *Travels in Iceland*, pp. 186, 7.

whole promontory of Thorsness was under the protection of the deity, but a small eminence, entitled Helgafels (*i. e.* the Holy Mount), was so peculiarly sacred, that none of the settlers were to look upon it until they had performed their morning ablutions, and each living creature which should trespass upon its precincts was liable to be punished with death. To the terrors of religion were added the solemnities of legal authority. Near the Holy Mount was established the place of justice, where the popular assemblies were held.¹ This spot was also sacred, neither to be defiled by blood, nor polluted by any of the baser necessities of nature, for satisfying which a neighbouring rock was appointed. In these institutions we recognise the rude commencement of social order and public law. The infant settlement of Thorolf was strengthened by the arrival of Biorn, the fugitive upon whose account he had incurred the indignation of King Harold, and by that of other northern chiefs, whom the fate of war, or the love of adventure, had banished from their respective

¹ Each little district of settlers had its provincial assembly, for the purpose of making laws, imposing punishments, and accommodating differences. At a later period, general assemblies of the whole Icelandic people, called Althing, were held at a place called Thingvalla, on the shores of a salt-water lake.—See *Mackenzie's Travels*. The word *thing* answers to the *negotium* of the Romans.

homes. Each chose his habitation according to his pleasure, and the settlement began to be divided into three districts, called Eyrarvert, Alpta-fiord, and Breida-wick, all of which acknowledged the authority of the pontiff Thorolf, and the sanctity of his institutions.

The death of Thorolf, however, led the way to internal dissension. A patriarch, called, from the number of his family, Barna-Kiallak (rich in children), was tempted to dispute the sanctity of the territory of Thorsness, which had been sedulously stipulated. His tribe, confident in their numbers, openly disputed the power of Thorstein, who had succeeded his father Thorolf as pontiff, and announced that when occasion pressed they would pay no more respect to the soil of the sacred territory than to unconsecrated ground, nor would they take the trouble to secede to the rock appointed for such purposes. With this foul intent they marched towards Thorsness, and were met by Thorstein at the head of his tribe, servants, and allies, who, after a sharp skirmish, was fortunately able to prevent the intended profanation of the sacred soil. But as neither party could boast decisive success, an armistice was agreed upon, and a congress opened under the mediation of an aged settler called Thordus. This ingenious referee at once removed the ostensible cause of dispute, by declaring, that the territory having been

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polluted by human blood shed in the conflict, it had lost its sanctity in future; and, to take away the secret cause of contention, he declared that Thorgrim, one of the sons of Kiallak, should be conjoined with Thorstein in the charge of the temple of Thor, with an equal share in the duties and revenues of the office of pontiff, and in the charge of protecting from sacrilege a new place of justice, which was now to be established. It is described as a circular range of upright stones, within which one more eminent marked the Stone of Thor, where human victims were immolated to the Thunderer, by breaking or crushing the spine. And this description may confute those antiquaries who are disposed to refer such circles exclusively to the Celtic tribes, and their priests the Druids.

Thorstein, son of Thorolf, perished by shipwreck. His grandson Snorro became the most distinguished support of his family; and the following commencement of his history marks the singular system of laws which already prevailed in Iceland, as well as the high honour in which the female sex was held in that early period of society. The tutelage of Snorro, whose father died young, had devolved upon Borko, the Fat, his father's brother, who had married Thordisa, his mother, and was thus at once his uncle and father-in-law. At the age of fourteen, Snorro, with two companions,

went abroad to visit his relations in Norway, and returned to Iceland after the lapse of a year. His companion Thorlef was splendid in dress, arms, and equipment, being girded with a sword of admirable workmanship, and bearing a shield painted blue, and exquisitely gilded, and a spear, the handle of which was plated with gold. But Snorro was dressed in a dark garment, mounted upon a black mare, and his whole appearance intimated want and dejection. This assumed poverty rendered Snorro more acceptable at Helgafels, the abode of his uncle Borko. For, by the law of descent, Snorro was entitled to one half of the possessions of his grandfather, now administered by Borko; and his mean appearance gave the latter ground to think that he would sell them in his necessity for an inconsiderable price. He was, therefore, not displeased to see his nephew return in a condition which did not seem to supply to him the means of escaping from his tutelage. A singular incident, however, interrupted their family concord.

Shortly after Snorro had taken up his abode with his uncle, a party of twelve armed men, headed by Eyulf Gray, suddenly appeared at Helgafels, and their leader announced that he had lately slain a relative of Thordisa, the mother of Snorro. Borko, to whom the slaughter was indifferent, and who was connected with Eyulf, received him joyfully, and com-

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manded his wife to make him good cheer. While she obeyed his commands with undisguised reluctance, Eyulf chanced to drop the spoon with which he was eating; as he stooped to recover it, the vindictive matron, unable to suppress her indignation, snatched his sword, and severely wounded him ere he could recover his erect posture. Borko, incensed at this attack upon his guest, struck his wife, and was about to repeat the blow, when Snorro, throwing himself between them, repelled his attack, and placing his mother by his side, announced haughtily his intention to protect her. Eyulf escaped with difficulty, and afterwards recovered from Borko a fine for the wound which he had sustained; and the uncle and nephew were obliged to have recourse to justice, to arrange their mutual claims, which were rendered yet more inextricable by this brawl.

When the litigants appeared before the assembled patriarchs of the settlement, Borko admitted that his nephew, in right of his father deceased, was entitled to one half of the territory of Helgafels, and he also agreed that they could not conveniently possess it in community. Wherefore he offered to purchase that property from Snorro, and to make payment of an adequate price. To this proposal Snorro replied, that his uncle ought first to fix the price to be given, and that he himself, as

descended of the elder brother, should then have it in his option either to sell his own share in the property, or to purchase Borko's moiety at the price to be so named. Borko, confident in the supposed poverty of his nephew, estimated the half of the joint property at sixty ounces of silver, a sum far beneath the real value; when, to his astonishment, Snorro at once made payment of the stipulated sum, and obtained full possession of his paternal mansion and estate.

Nor did the vexations of Borko end here. For when he was about to depart from Helgafels, his wife Thordisa invoked witnesses to bear testimony that she solemnly divorced her husband Borko, alleging, as a sufficient reason, that he had raised his hand against her person. And such were the rights of an Icelandic Mater-familias, that the divorce and division of goods immediately took place between her and her husband, although one would have presumed that the attempt to murder a guest in his own presence, might have been admitted as a satisfactory apology for the violence of the husband. Snorro having thus at an easy rate obtained possession of his whole paternal inheritance of Helgafels, lost no time in assuming the sacred character of priest of Thor; and continued, from his boldness, craft, and dexterity, to act a conspicuous part in the various feuds which agitated

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the settlers in this sterile and dreary country, as fiercely as if they had been contending for the mines of Peru, or the vineyards of Italy; so that the subsequent part of this history may be considered as the annals of Snorro's pontificate.

Our annalist has not left the scene altogether unvaried. Wars and prosecutions before the assembly of the people are indeed the ground-work; but such spells and supernatural incidents, as the superstition of the age believed in, are introduced, like the omens and miracles of classic history. Such incidents, indeed, make an invariable part of the history of a rude age; and the chronicles which do not afford these marks of human credulity, may be grievously suspected as deficient in authenticity. The following account of a trial of skill between two celebrated sorceresses, occupies several pages of the Eyrbyggja-Saga.

« Tell me,» said Katla, a handsome and lively widow, to Gunlaugar, an accomplished and gallant young warrior, « tell me why thou goest so oft to Mahfahlida?—Is it to caress an old woman?» « Thine own age, Katla,» answered the youth inconsiderately, « might prevent thy making that of Geirrida a subject of reproach.»—« I little deemed,» replied the offended matron, « that we were on an equality in that particular—but thou, who supposest that Geirrida is the sole source of know-

ledge, mayst find that there are others who equal her in science." It happened in the course of the following winter that Gunlaugar, in company with Oddo, the son of Katla, had renewed one of those visits to Geirrida, with which Katla had upbraided him. "Thou shalt not depart to-night," said the sage matron; "evil spirits are abroad, and thy bad destiny predominates."—"We are two in company," answered Gunlaugar, "and have therefore nothing to fear."—"Oddo," replied Geirrida, "will be of no aid to thee; but go, since thou wilt go, and pay the penalty of thy rashness."—In their way they visited the rival matron, and Gunlaugar was invited to remain in her house that night. This he declined, and passing forward alone, was next morning found lying before the gate of his father Thorbiorn, severely wounded and deprived of his judgment. Various causes were assigned for this disaster, but Oddo, asserting that they had parted in anger that evening from Geirrida, insisted that his companion must have sustained the injury through her sorcery. Geirrida was accordingly cited to the popular assembly, and accused of witchcraft. But twelve witnesses, or compurgators, having asserted upon their oath the innocence of the accused party, Geirrida was honourably freed from the accusation brought against her.¹ Her acquittal did

¹ This ceremony of compurgation formed, as is well

not terminate the rivalry between the two sorceresses, for Geirrida belonging to the family of Kiliakan, and Katla to that of the pontiff Snorro, the animosity which still subsisted between these septs became awakened by the quarrel.

It chanced that Thorbiorn, called Digri (or the corpulent), one of the family of Snorro, had some horses which fed in the mountain pastures, near to those of Thorarin, called the Black, the son of the enchantress Geirrida. But when autumn arrived, and the horses were to be withdrawn from the mountains, and housed for the winter, those of Thorbiorn could nowhere be found, and Oddo, the son of Katla, being sent to consult a wizard, brought back a dubious answer, which seemed to indicate that they had been stolen by Thorarin. Thorbiorn, with Oddo, and a party of armed followers, immediately set forth for Mahfahlida, the dwelling of Geirrida and her son Thorarin. Arrived before the gate, they demanded permission to search for the horses which were amissing. This Thorarin refused,

known, the remote origin of the trial by jury. The compurgators were at first a kind of witnesses, who, upon their general knowledge of the character of the accused, gave evidence of his being incapable of committing the crime imputed, but gradually obtained the character of judges, who formed their opinion upon the evidence of others adduced in their presence.

alleging, that neither was the search demanded duly authorized by law, nor were the proper witnesses cited to be present, nor did Thorbiorn offer any sufficient pledge of security when claiming the exercise of so hazardous a privilege. Thorbiorn replied, that as Thorarin declined to permit a search, he must be held as admitting his guilt; and constituting for that purpose a temporary court of justice, by chusing out six judges, he formally accused Thorarin of theft before the gate of his own house. At this the patience of Geirrida forsook her. « Well, » said she to her son Thorarin, « is it said of thee, that thou art more a woman than a man, or thou wouldst not bear these intolerable affronts. » Thorarin, fired at the reproach, rushed forth with his servants and guests; a skirmish soon disturbed the legal process which had been instituted, and one or two of both parties were wounded or slain, before the wife of Thorarin, and the female attendants, could separate the fray by flinging their mantles over the weapons of the combatants. Thorbiorn and his party retreating, Thorarin proceeded to examine the field of battle. Alas! among the reliques of the fight was a bloody hand, too slight and fair to belong to any of the combatants. It was that of his wife Ada, who had met this misfortune in her attempts to separate the skirmish. Incensed to the uttermost, Thorarin threw aside

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his constitutional moderation, and mounting on horseback, with his allies and followers pursued the hostile party, and overtook them in a hay-field, where they had halted to repose their horses, and to exult over the damage they had done to Thorarin. At this moment he assailed them with such fury, that he slew Thorbiorn upon the spot, and killed several of his attendants; although Oddo, the son of Katla, escaped free from wounds, having been dressed by his mother in an invulnerable garment. After this action, more bloody than usually happened in an Icelandic engagement, Thorarin returned to Mahfahlida, and being questioned by his mother concerning the events of the skirmish, he answered in the improvisatory and enigmatical poetry of his age and country,—

From me the foul reproach be far,
With which a female waked the war,
From me, who shunned not in the fray,
Through foemen fierce to hew my way
(Since meet it is the eagle's brood
On the fresh corpse should find their food);
Then spared I not in fighting field,
With stalwart hand my sword to wield :
And well may claim at Odin's shrine,
The praise that waits this deed of mine.

To which effusion Geirrida answered, « Do these verses imply the death of Thorbiorn? »
—And Thorarin, alluding to the legal process

which Thorbiorn had instituted against him, resumed his song:

Sharp bit the sword beneath the hood
Of him whose zeal the cause pursued,
And ruddy flow'd the stream of death,
Ere the grim brand resumed the sheath;
Now, on the buckler of the slain
The raven sits, his draught to drain,
For gore-drench'd is his visage bold
That hither came his courts to hold.

As the consequence of this slaughter was likely to be a prosecution at the instance of the pontiff Snorro, Thorarin had now recourse to his allies and kindred, of whom the most powerful were Arnkill, his maternal uncle, and Verimond, who readily promised their aid both in the field and in the Comitia, or popular meeting, in spring, before which it was to be presumed Snorro would indict Thorarin for the slaughter of his kinsman. Arnkill could not, however, forbear asking his nephew how he had so far lost his usual command of temper. He replied in verse—

Till then, the master of my mood,
Men call'd me gentle, mild, and good;
But yon fierce dame's sharp tongue might wake
In wintry den the frozen snake.

While Thorarin spent the winter with his uncle Arnkill, he received information from his mother Geirrida, that Oddo, son of her old

rival Katla, was the person who had cut off the hand of his wife Ada, and that he gloried in the fact. Thorarin and Arnkill determined on instant vengeance, and, travelling rapidly, surprised the house of Katla. The undismayed sorceress, on hearing them approach, commanded her son to sit close beside her, and when the assailants entered they only beheld Katla, spinning coarse yarn from what seemed a large distaff, with her female domestics seated around her. — « Her son, » she said, « was absent on a journey ; » and Thorarin and Arnkill having searched the house in vain, were obliged to depart with this answer.

They had not, however, gone far, before the well-known skill of Katla in optical delusion occurred to them, and they resolved on a second and stricter search. Upon their return they found Katla in the outer apartment, who seemed to be shearing the hair of a tame kid, but was in reality cutting the locks of her son Oddo. Entering the inner-room, they found the large distaff flung carelessly upon a bench. They returned yet a third time, and a third delusion was prepared for them ; for Katla had given her son the appearance of a hog, which seemed to grovel upon the heap of ashes. Arnkill now seized and split the distaff which he had at first suspected, upon which Katla tauntingly observed, that if their visits had been unusually frequent that evening, they

could not be said to be altogether ineffectual, since they had destroyed a distaff.

They were accordingly returning completely baffled, when Geirrida met them, and upbraided them with carelessness in searching for their enemy. « Return yet again,» she said, « and I will accompany you.» — Katla's maidens, still upon the watch, announced to her the return of the hostile party, their number augmented by one who wore a blue mantle. « Alas!» cried Katla, « it is the sorceress Geirrida, against whom spells will be of no avail.» Immediately rising from the raised and boarded seat which she occupied, she concealed Oddo beneath it, and covered it with cushions as before, on which she stretched herself, complaining of indisposition. Upon the entrance of the hostile party, Geirrida, without speaking a word, flung aside her mantle, took out a piece of seal's-skin, in which she wrapped up Katla's head, and commanded that she should be held by some of the attendants, while the others broke open the boarded space beneath which Oddo lay concealed, seized upon him, bound him, and led him away captive with his mother. Next morning Oddo was hanged, and Katla stoned to death; but not until she had confessed that through her sorcery she had occasioned the disaster of Gunlaugar, which first led the way to these

feuds. This execution is remarkable, because it seems to have taken place without any previous ceremony of judicial procedure, which, in general, we find the Icelanders considered as necessary preliminaries to the condemnation and execution of criminals.

Spring now approached, and it became necessary for Thorarin to take some resolution; for, although it seemed possible that the slaughter which had taken place on occasion of this unhappy feud might be atoned by a pecuniary imposition, yet so many persons had been slain, that the usual fines corresponding to their rank were more than sufficient to exhaust his fortune: And, to hasten his determination, Snorro, accompanied by a band of eighty horsemen, appeared before the house of Arnkill, for the purpose of citing Thorarin to answer for the slaughter of Thorbiorn. This citation was performed in obedience to the Icelandic law, which permitted no accusation to be brought against any party, who had not been previously apprised of the charge by a summons delivered to him personally, or at his dwelling-place.¹ The ceremony being peaceably performed, Thorarin,

¹ This law of summons is often mentioned, and seems to have been regularly insisted upon. It was attended with some risk to the party who ventured to make the citation, and often ended in a skirmish.

observing the strong party in attendance upon Snorro, broke forth into a poetical rhapsody:

No feeble force, no female hand,
Compels me from my native land;
O'ermatch'd in numbers and in might,
By banded hosts in armour bright,
In vain attesting laws and gods,
A guiltless man, I yield to odds.

Accordingly, ere the popular assembly met, Thorarin, with his relative Verimond, embarked in a vessel for Scandinavia. Of the former, the history tells us no more; but Verimond, who separated from him, and spent the subsequent winter at the court of Count Haco, son of Sigurd, then regent of Norway, continues to make a figure in the Eyrbyggja-Saga.

It seems that Haco had at his court two of those remarkable champions, called Berserkir; men, who, by moral or physical excitation of some kind or other, were wont to work themselves into a state of frenzy, during which they achieved deeds passing human strength, and rushed, without sense of danger, or feeling of pain, upon every species of peril that could be opposed to them. They used no defensive armour, and fought at times only covered with their under garments; hence, perhaps, their name, *Berserkir*, *Bare* but for the *Sark*, or shirt. Verimond contracted a sort of friend-

ship with these champions, who, unless when seized with their fits of fury, were not altogether discourteous or evil-disposed. But as any contradiction was apt to excite their stormy passions, their company could not be called very safe or commodious. Verimond, however, who now desired to return to Iceland, conceived that in the feuds to which he might be there exposed, the support of the two Berserkir would be of the greatest advantage to him. Acting upon this idea, when Haco at his departure offered him any reasonable boon which he might require, he prayed that he would permit these two champions to accompany him to his native country. The Count assented, but not without showing him the danger of his request. They are only accustomed, said Haco, to submit to men of great power and high rank, and will be reluctant and disobedient stipendiaries to a person of a meaner station.

Verimond, however, grasped at the permission of the Count, though reluctantly granted, and was profuse in promises to Halli and Leikner, providing they would accompany him to Iceland. They frankly objected to the poverty of the country, yet agreed to go thither, apprising their conductor, at the same time, that their friendship would not endure long if he refused them any boon which was in his power to grant, and which they might chuse to de-

mand. Verimond again assured them of his anxious wish to gratify them in every particular, and transported them to Iceland, where he was not long of discovering that he had burdened himself with a very difficult task. Halli's first request was, that he should be provided with a spouse, rich, nobly born, and beautiful. But, as it was not easy to find a maiden so gifted, who would unite her fate with a foreigner of mean birth, who was besides a Berserkir, Verimond was compelled to elude the request of his champion.

This was likely to occasion such enmity, that Verimond began to think of transferring his troublesome and ungovernable satellites to his brother Arngrim, a man of a stern, fierce, and active disposition, who had carried on numerous feuds, and in every case refused to make pecuniary compensation for the slaughters which he had committed. Thus he was usually called Styr (*i. e.* the Stirring or Tumultuous); as Verimond was termed Miófii, or the Delicate. Styr, nevertheless, tumultuous as he was, could not be prevailed upon to accept of the patronage of the Berserkir. It was in vain that Verimond protested that he gifted him with two such champions as would enable him to become an easy victor in every quarrel he might engage in, and that he designed this present as a gage of their fraternal union. Styr, professing a sincere confidence

in his brotherly affection, intimated, that he had heard enough of the disposition of these foreign warriors, to satisfy him that they would be rather embarrassing than useful dependants, and was fully determined never to admit them within his family.

Verimond was therefore obliged to change his tone, to acknowledge the dread in which he stood of the Berserkir, and request his brother's advice and assistance to rid him of them; "That," answered Styr, "is a different proposal. I could never have accepted them as a pledge of favour or friendship; but to relieve thee from danger and difficulty, I am content to encumber myself with the charge of thy associates." The next point was to reconcile the Berserkir (who might resent being transferred like bondsmen from the one brother to the other) to this change of masters.

The warlike and fierce disposition of Styr seemed, however, so much more suitable to their own, than that of Verimond, that they speedily acquiesced, and, accompanying their new patron upon a nocturnal excursion, evinced their strength in breaking to pieces a strong wooden frame, or bed, in which his enemy had taken refuge, so that Styr had an opportunity of slaying him. The presumption of Halli, however, soon discomposed their union. The champion cast the eyes of affection on Asdisa, the daughter of his patron, a

haughty, fiery, and robust damsel, well qualified to captivate the heart of a Berserkir. He formally announced to Styr that he demanded her hand in marriage, that a refusal would be a breach of their friendship; but that if he would accept of his alliance, he and his brother would render him the most powerful man in Iceland.

At this unexpected proposal Styr for a time remained silent, considering how best he might evade the presumptuous demand of this frantic champion, and at length observed, that the friends of his family must be consulted upon his daughter's establishment. "Three days' space," answered Halli, "will suffice for that purpose, and be mindful that our friendship depends on thine answer." Styr in great doubt and trouble journeyed to Helgafels, to consult the experience of the pontiff Snorro. When Snorro learned that he came to ask advice, "Let us ascend," he said, "the sacred mount; for such councils as are taken on that holy spot rarely prove unpropitious." They remained in deep conference on the mount of Thor until evening, nor did any one know the purpose which they agitated, but what followed sufficiently shows the nature of the counsels suggested upon the holy ground.

Styr, so soon as he returned home, announced to Halli his expectation, that since he could not redeem his bride by payment of

a sum of money as was usual, he should substitute in lieu thereof, according to ancient right and custom, the performance of some unusual and difficult task. "And what shall that task be?" demanded the suitor. "Thou shalt form," said Styr, "a path through the rocks at Biarnarhaf, and a fence betwixt my property and that of my neighbours; also thou shalt construct a house for the reception of my flocks, and these tasks accomplished thou shalt have Asdisa to wife." "Though unaccustomed to such servile toil," replied the Berserkir, "I accept of the terms thou hast offered." And by the assistance of his brother he accomplished the path required, a work of the greatest labour, and erected the bound-fence, of which vestiges remained in the days of our historian.

The Berserkir were now labouring at the stable for the flocks, while the servants of Styr were employed in the construction of a subterranean bath, so contrived that it could on a sudden be deluged with boiling water, or heated to a suffocating degree. On the last day, when the brethren were approaching the conclusion of their task, Asdisa, the daughter of Styr, passed by them splendidly arrayed. Then sung Halli,—

Oh whither dost thou wend thy way,
Fair maiden, in such rich array,
For never have I seen thee roam
So gaily dressed, so far from home?—

Then Leikner also sung,—

Till now that stole of purple rare
Full seldom did the maiden wear,
Why is she now attired so fair?
The cause, O maid benign, display,
Of that unwonted raiment gay,
Nor thus disdainful pass us by,
With silent lip and scornful eye.

But Asdisa, disliking either the bard or the poetry, or both, passed on without making any answer.

Evening now approached, and, the stipulated task being ended, the champions returned to the dwelling of Styr. The Berserkir were extremely exhausted, as was common with persons of their condition, whose profuse expenditure of strength and spirits induced a proportional degree of relaxation after severe labour. They, therefore, gladly accepted Styr's proposal, that they should occupy the newly-constructed bath. When they had entered, their insidious patron caused the trap-door to be blockaded, and a newly-stripped bullock's skin to be stretched before the entrance, and then proceeded to pour in scalding water through the aperture contrived for that purpose, and to heat the bath to an intolerable pitch. The unfortunate Berserkir endeavoured to break out, and Halli succeeded in forcing the door, but his feet being entangled in the slippery hide, he was stabbed by Styr ere he

could make any defence: his brother attempting the entrance, was forced headlong back into the bath, and thus both perished. Styr caused their bodies to be interred in a narrow glen, of such depth that nothing but the sky was visible from its recesses. Then Styr composed this song concerning his exploit:—

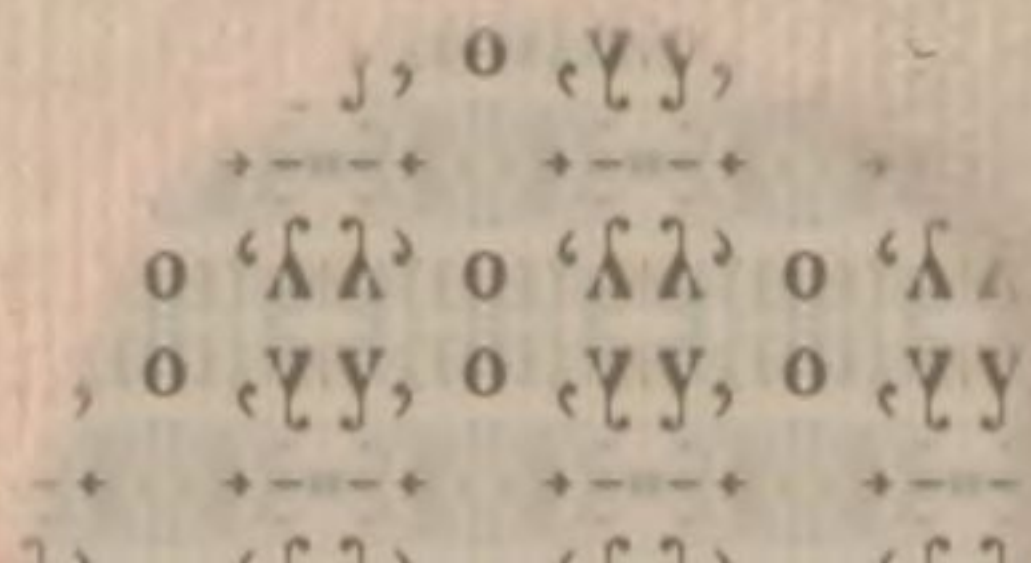
These champions from beyond the main
Of Iceland's sons I deem'd the bane,
Nor fear'd I to endure the harm
And frantic fury of their arm,
But, conqueror, gave this valley's gloom
To be the grim Berserkir's tomb.

When the pontiff Snorro heard that the stratagem of Styr had proved successful, he paid him a visit, in which, after a day's consultation, Asdisa, the daughter of Styr, was betrothed to Snorro. The marriage was solemnized shortly afterwards, and the activity and intrepidity of Styr being aided by, and aiding in turn, the wisdom and experience of Snorro, the power of both was greatly extended and fortified by this alliance.

Passing some feuds of less interest, we come to the history of Thorolf Bægifot. This chief had in his youth defied to combat an aged champion called Ulfar, for the sake of acquiring his territory. Ulfar, though old and dim of sight, preferred death to dishonour, and met Thorolf in single combat. Ulfar fell, but Thorolf received a wound in the leg, of which

he ever after halted, and thus acquired the name of Bægifot, or the Crook-footed. Thorolf had one son, the same Arnkill who figured in the history of Thorarin the Black, and two daughters, one of whom was the celebrated enchantress Geirrida. As Thorolf waxed aged, he became of a cankered and savage disposition, and as crooked in his mind as in his limbs. Many causes of discord occurred betwixt him and his son Arnkill, until at length they were in a state of utter enmity.

The nearest neighbour of Thorolf Bægifot was Ulfar, a freedman of Thorbrand, possessed of a fair property. It was said of this cultivator, that he understood the art of making hay better than any man in Iceland, and that his crop was never injured by the rain, or his cattle by the storms. Thorolf went to consult this sage upon the management of the hay-crop on a field which they possessed in common. "This week," said Ulfar, "will be rainy; let us use it in cutting the hay; it will be followed by a fortnight of dry weather, which we will employ in drying it." Thorolf, however, became impatient, and, dubious of a change of weather, ordered his hay to be carried to his yard and ricked up, while that of Ulfar was yet lying in the swathe; and at the same time, whether impelled by cupidity, caprice, or jealousy, does not appear, he carried home also that part of the crop which



belonged to the weather-wise Ulfar. The latter reclaimed his property; but, after some altercation, saw no means of redress so effectual as to appeal to the justice of Arnkill, the son of Thorolf. Arnkill, after vain applications for justice to his father, was at length contented to indemnify Ulfar by making payment to him of the value of the hay, a proposal to which his father had refused to accede, saying, in the plenitude of oppressive power, «That the churl was already too wealthy.» Arnkill, however, indemnified himself of the price of the hay, by driving off twelve fat oxen belonging to his father, which he alleged were compensated by the money thus advanced to Ulfar.

It was now the feast of Jol, and Thorolf, who had drank freely, and circulated much liquor among his bondsmen, was so incensed against Ulfar, that he offered liberty to any of his serfs who would burn his house, and consume him among the flames. Six of his bondsmen set out upon this neighbourly exploit; but the flames as they began to rise, became visible to Arnkill, who hastened with his followers to the house of Ulfar, extinguished the fire, and made prisoners the incendiaries. These he transported to his own house, and hanged them next morning without ceremony, to the great increase of his father's discontent. Ulfar, on the other hand, rejoiced at having

acquired so active and powerful a protector, chose Arnkill for his immediate patron, to the displeasure of the family of his original master Thorbrand, who viewed with resentment the chance of losing the inheritance of their father's freedman.

In consequence of this transaction, the wrath of Thorolf grew so high against his son, that he went to the pontiff Snorro, to prevail on him to prosecute Arnkill to the uttermost, for the slaughter of his six bondsmen. Snorro, at first, declined to have any interference with the matter, alleging the good character of Arnkill, and the foul treason in which the serfs of Thorolf had been engaged when seized and executed. « I wot well the cause of thy regard for Arnkill, » answered Thorolf; « thou thinkest he will pay for thy support in the assembly more freely than I. But hearken: I know thy desire to possess the fair woods of Krakaness, which pertain to me. I will bestow them on thee, if thou wilt prosecute the cause arising from the slaughter of my bondsmen with the utmost severity, without sparing on account of Arnkill's relation to me, or his friendship to thyself. » Snorro could not resist the prospect of gain thus artfully held out to him, and agreed to prosecute the cause to the uttermost.

The pleadings were ingenious on both sides, the age and country considered, and show

some progress in the intricate punctilios of municipal jurisprudence. The death of the bondsmen was urged by Snorro as inflicted without legal process. The accused defended himself upon the fact of their being apprehended in the act of burning Ulfar's habitation. It was replied, that though this might have justified their being slain on the spot, yet it gave those who seized them no right to execute them elsewhere after a day's interval. At length the matter was referred to the award of the two brethren, Styr and Verimond, who appointed Arnkill to pay a fine of twelve ounces of silver for the death of each domestic. Thorolf, incensed to the highest pitch at this lenient imposition, broke forth into complaints against Snorro, whom he considered as having betrayed his cause, and retired from the convention to meditate a bloody revenge against all his enemies.

Ulfar, the most helpless and inoffensive, was the first to experience Thorolf's resentment. He had been feasting with his patron Arnkill, and had departed loaded with arms and other presents, when he was waylaid and assassinated by Spagil, a villain whom Thorolf had hired to the deed by an ample bribe. Arnkill, who chanced to be abroad that evening, observed a man at a distance bearing the shield which he had so lately bestowed on Ulfar. "That buckler," said he, "Ulfar hath not

parted from willingly; pursue the bearer of it, and if, as I dread, he has slain my client through my father's instigation, bring him not before my sight, but slay him instantly." A part of his followers instantly pursued Spagil, and having seized and compelled him to avow his crime, and confess by whom it was prompted, they killed him on the spot, and brought back to Arnkill the spoils of the unhappy Ulfar.

The disputes concerning the inheritance of Ulfar now augmented the dissensions of the settlement. It was claimed by the family of Thorbrand, as Ulfar had been his freedman, and by Arnkill, as his immediate patron and protector. The former, however, proved the weaker party; and on having recourse to Snorro, received little encouragement to cope with Arnkill: "You share only," said the wily pontiff, "the general lot of the tribe, which, while Arnkill lives, must put up with such aggressions unavenged." "Most truly spoken," replied the sons of Thorbrand, "nor can we complain of thee, Snorro, for refusing to advocate our cause, who art so tame and cold in asserting thine own." With these words of reproach, they left the assembly in great discontent.

Thorold Bægifot began now to repent having bestowed upon Snorro the woods of Krakeness without obtaining the stipulated grati-

fication of his resentment. He went to the pontiff and demanded restitution, alleging, that he had transferred the woods in loan, not as a gift. But Snorro refused to listen to his demand, and appealed to the testimony of those who witnessed the transaction, that he had received the woods in full property. In the warmth of passion, Thorolf now had recourse to his son, and proposed to him to renew their natural alliance, and that the pledge of their friendship should be the union of their forces to recover from Snorro the woods of Krakaness. "It was not for love of me," said Arnkill, "that thou gavest Snorro possession of these woods; and although I know he has no just title to them, I will not enter into feud with the pontiff to gratify thy resentment by quarrelling with him."—"Thy cowardice," said Thorolf, "rather than any other motive, causes thy affected moderation."—"Think on the matter what thou wilt," said Arnkill, "but I will not enter into feud with Snorro on that subject."

Thus repulsed at every hand, and in all the agony of impotent fury, Thorolf Bægifot returned to his own house. He spoke to no one, partook not of the evening meal, but, sitting in silence at the highest part of the table, suffered his domestics to retire to rest without quitting his chair. In the morning he was found dead in the same place and posture.

A message instantly conveyed to Arnkill the news of his father's death. When he came, the corpse remained seated in the posture in which Thorolf had expired, and the terrified family hinted that he had fallen by the mode of death of all others the most dreaded by the Icelanders.¹ Arnkill entered the apartment, but in such a manner as to approach the body from behind; and he cautioned the attendants that no one should look upon the face of the corpse until the due propitiatory rites were performed. It was not without application of force that the corpse could be removed from the seat which it occupied; the face was then veiled, and the customary ceremonies paid to the dead body. This done, Arnkill commanded the wall of the apartment to be broken down behind the spot where Thorolf had died, and the corpse being raised up with difficulty, and transported through the breach,² was deposited in a grave strongly built.

But these meet honours, and this grave, however fortified, could not appease or retain

¹ Suicide seems to be indicated.

² It is still an article of popular superstition in Scotland that the corpse of a suicide ought not to be carried out of the apartment by the door, but lowered through a window, or conveyed through a breach in the wall. Neglect of this observance is supposed to expose the house to be haunted.

the restless spirit of Thorolf Bægifot. He appeared in the district by night and day, slew men and cattle, and harrowed the country so much by his frequent apparition and mischievous exploits, that his son Arnkill, on the repeated complaints of the inhabitants, resolved to change the place of his father's sepulture. Some opposition was threatened by the sons of Thorbrand, who refused to permit the corpse to be carried through their domains, until reminded by their father, that it was illegal to refuse passage to those who were travelling in discharge of a duty imposed by law, and such was the burial of the dead. The body of Thorolf was found on opening the tomb, but his aspect was fearful and grisly to a preternatural degree. He was placed on a bier between two strong oxen, which, nevertheless, were worn out by fatigue ere they had transported him a few miles. Others were substituted in their room, but when they attained the summit of a hill, at some distance from the destined place of sepulture, the harnessed steers became frantic, and breaking their yokes, rushed down the precipice and perished. The corpse, too, became of such ponderous weight, that it could by no means be transported any farther, so that Arnkill was fain to consign it to the earth on the ridge of the hill where it lay, and which took its name henceforward from that of Bægifot. Arnkill

caused a mound of immense height to be piled above the grave, and Thorolf, during the lifetime of his son, remained quiet in his new abode, although, as will be hereafter shown, he gave further disturbance after Arnkill's death.

After the death of Thorolf, Arnkill engaged in various disputes with the pontiff Snorro for the recovery of the woods of Krakaness, and with the sons of Thorbrand, on account of their old feud. He had the better in many skirmishes, and in many debates before the national convention. Nor was Snorro for a length of time successful in his various efforts to remove this powerful rival;—for, although a priest, he was not in any respect nice in his choice of means on such occasions, and practised repeatedly against Arnkill's life by various attempts at assassination. At length, however, irritated to the highest pitch, by a conversation in which he heard strangers extol the power and courage of Arnkill above his own, the pontiff resolved to employ in his revenge the sons of Thorbrand. To Thorlef Kimbi, the strongest of these champions, he gave a choice war-axe, and, bidding him observe the length of the handle, added, " Yet it is scarce long enough to reach the head of Arnkill while making hay at the farm of Ulfar." It must be observed, that Arnkill durst not oc-

cupy the farm of Ulfar, which had been so fiercely disputed between him and the sons of Thorbrand, otherwise than by sending labourers there in the day, and withdrawing them before night-fall. In the hay-season, however, he also employed his wains by moon-light to transport the hay from these possessions to his own domain. The sons of Thorbrand, embracing the hint of the pontiff, watched his motions; and, learning that one moonlight night Arnkill had himself accompanied three of his bondsmen for the above purpose, they despatched a messenger to inform Snorro, that «the old eagle had taken his flight towards Orligstad.» The pontiff instantly rose, and, accompanied by nine armed followers, traversed the ice to Altifiord, where he joined the party of the sons of Thorbrand, six in number. Arnkill, who descried his enemies advancing towards him, despatched his unarmed attendants to his dwelling, to summon his servants to his assistance. «I, meantime,» said he, «will defend myself on the heap of hay, nor will I afford an easy victory to my foemen.» But of these messengers, one perished in crossing a torrent, the other loitered by the way. Meantime Arnkill, after defending himself valiantly, was finally overpowered and slain. Of which sings the Scald Thormoda Ulfilson;—

A noble meal the pontiff strew'd
 For the wild eagle's hungry brood;
 A noble corpse hath filled the tomb,
 When valiant Arnkill met his doom.

Arnkill is regretted by the annalist as a model of the qualities most valued in an Icelandic chief. He excelled all in accurate observance of ancient rites and customs, was stout-hearted and brave in enterprise, and so prudent and eloquent, that he was always successful in the causes which he prosecuted in the popular assemblies—qualities which drew upon him the envy that occasioned his death. His sepulchral mound, raised upon the sea-shore, was still conspicuous in the time of the historian. The property of Arnkill, and the charge of exacting vengeance for his blood, passed to females, and hence the duty was but indifferently discharged. Thorolf Kimbi, who had struck the deadly blow, was banished for three years from Iceland, a poor atonement for the slaughter of such a champion. And hence, says the annalist, it was enacted that neither a woman nor a youth under sixteen years, should prosecute in a cause for avenging of blood. Arnkill was slain in the year 993.

Omitting a desperate feud between the sons of Thorbrand and those of Thorlak, we shall only notice the accuracy with which the *compensatio injuriarum* was weighed in the Comitia of Helgafels, when the quarrel was accom-

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modated. Every disaster which had been sustained by the one party, was weighed against one of a similar nature inflicted upon the other. Life for life, wound for wound, eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, were adjusted with the utmost precision, and the balance arising in favour of one of the contending septs was valued and atoned for by a pecuniary mulct. This compact, which was followed by an internal peace of unusual duration, took place in the year 999.

In the year 1000, the Christian religion was introduced into Iceland by her apostles Gizur the White, and Hialto.¹ Snorro became a convert, and lent the greatest assistance in extending the new faith.² It is not easy to

¹ Hialto was an Icelfander by birth, but had been banished for composing a song in disparagement of the heathen deities, of which the following is a literal version :—

I will not serve an idol log :

For me, I care not which,

But either Odin is a dog,

Or Freya is a bitch.

Historia Ecclesiastica Islandiæ, vol. I, p. 57.

² We learn from another authority, that the heathen priests and nobles held a public conference with the Christian missionaries in the general assembly of the tribes of Iceland. While the argument was yet in discussion, news arrived that an eruption of lava was laying waste a neighbouring district. "It is the effect of the wrath of our offended deities," exclaimed the worshippers of

see what motive the priest of Thor could have for exchanging a worship, over which he himself presided, for a new religion, since the unprincipled cunning and selfish character of Snorro seem to deprive him of the credit of having acted upon conviction. He procured the erection, nevertheless, of a Christian church at Helgafels, upon the site of the temple dedicated to Thor, and acted in every other respect as a sincere convert. As this was the third attempt to preach Christianity in the island, it seems probable that the good sense of the Icelanders had already rejected in secret the superstitions of paganism, and that the worship of Thor had declined in the estimation of the people. Snorro, therefore, in consistence with his character, placed himself at the head of the revolution in religion, which he saw could not be resisted.

The same year is assigned as the date of a very curious legend. A ship from Iceland chanced to winter in a haven near Helgafels. Among the passengers was a woman named Thorgunna, a native of the Hebrides, who

Odin and Thor. « And what excited their wrath,” answered Snorro, the hero of the Eyrbyggja-Saga, though still himself a heathen, « what excited their wrath when these rocks of lava, which we ourselves tread, were themselves a glowing torrent?” This ready answer silenced the advocates of heathenism.—*Historia Ecclesiastica Islandiæ*, vol. I. p. 62.

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was reported by the sailors to possess garments and household furniture of a fashion far surpassing those used in Iceland. Thurida, sister of the pontiff Snorro, and wife of Thorodd, a woman of a vain and covetous disposition, and, as was believed, of licentious manners, attracted by these reports, made a visit to the stranger, but could not prevail upon her to display her treasures. Persisting, however, in her inquiries, she pressed Thorgunna to take up her abode at the house of Thorodd. The Hebridean reluctantly assented, but added, that as she could labour at every usual kind of domestic industry, she trusted in that manner to discharge the obligation she might lie under to the family, without giving any part of her property, in recompense of her lodging. As Thurida continued to urge her request, Thorgunna accompanied her to Froda, the house of Thorodd, where the seamen deposited a huge chest and cabinet, containing the property of her new guest, which Thurida viewed with curious and covetous eyes. So soon as they had pointed out to Thorgunna the place assigned for her bed, she opened the chest, and took forth such an embroidered bed coverlid, and such a splendid and complete set of tapestry hangings, and bed-furniture of English linen, interwoven with silk, as had never been seen in Iceland. « Sell to me, » said the covetous matron, « this

fair bed-furniture.”—“Believe me,” answered Thorgunna, “I will not lie upon straw in order to feed thy pomp and vanity;” an answer which so greatly displeased Thurida that she never again repeated her request.

Thorgunna, to whose character subsequent events added something of a mystical solemnity, is described as being a woman of a tall and stately appearance, of a dark complexion, and having a profusion of black hair. She was advanced in age; assiduous in the labours of the field and of the loom; a faithful attendant upon divine worship, after the Christian rites; grave, silent, and solemn in domestic society. She had little intercourse with the household of Thorodd, and showed particular dislike to two of its inmates. These were Thorer, who, having lost a leg in the skirmish between Thorbiorn and Thorarin the Black, was called Thorer-Widlegr (wooden-leg), from the substitute he had adopted; and his wife, Thorgrima, called Galldra-Kinna (wicked sorceress), from her supposed skill in enchantments. Kiartan, a boy of excellent promise, was the only person of the household to whom Thorgunna showed much affection; and she was much vexed at times when the childish petulance of the boy made an indifferent return to her kindness.

We must here digress a little upon the subject of Kiartan. He was the son of Thurida,



sister of the pontiff Snorro, and also passed for the son of her husband Thorodd, but this was not so certain. Biorn, a stranger, who had acquired the name of the Hero of Bradwick, had been assiduous in his visits to Thurida, in the year preceding the birth of Kiartan. The jealousy of the husband was awakened, and he employed a sorceress to raise a nocturnal tempest to destroy Biorn on his way to his mistress. This attempt proved in vain, as well as several others to take his life by violence. At length, while Snorro was about to surround Biorn with a body of horse, conceiving his own honour interested in that of his sister Thurida, the champion, perceiving their purpose, suddenly seized on the pontiff, and, holding a dagger to his throat, compelled him to a treaty, by which Snorro agreed to withdraw his followers; and Biorn on his part, consented to remove all further stain upon Thurida's reputation, by departing from Iceland. Biorn kept his word, and for a long time was not heard of. Many years afterwards, however, an Icelandic vessel, while on the western coast of Iceland, was surprised by a storm, which drove her beyond the knowledge of the pilot into the Atlantic Ocean. After sailing far to the west, they reached an unknown land, occupied by a savage people, who immediately seized on the merchants and crew of the vessel, and began

to dispute whether they should reduce them to a state of slavery, or kill them on the spot. At this moment there came up a body of horsemen, headed by a leader of eminent stature and distinguished appearance, whom the assembled natives seemed to respect as their chief. He addressed the merchants in the Norse language, and learning that they came from Iceland, made many inquiries concerning the pontiff Snorro and his sister Thurida, but especially concerning her son Kiartan. Being satisfied on these points, he intimated his intention to set them at liberty, cautioning them never to return to that country, as the inhabitants were hostile to strangers. The merchants ventured to inquire the name of their benefactor. This he refused to communicate, lest his Icelandic friends, coming to seek him, should encounter the danger from which his present guests had been delivered, without his having the same power to protect them; for in this region there were chiefs, he said, more powerful than he himself. When they were about to depart, he requested them to present, on his behalf, a sword to Kiartan, and a ring to Thurida, as coming from one who loved the sister of Snorro better than the pontiff himself. These words were supposed to indicate Biorn the Hero of Bradwick, and father of Kiartan, by his clandestine intrigue with Thurida; and the whole story serves to

show that the Icelanders had some obscure tradition, either founded on conjecture, or accidental intercourse, concerning the existence of land to the westward of the Atlantic.

We now return to Thorgunna, the guest, as we have seen, of Thorodd and his wife. After this mysterious stranger had dwelt at Froda for some time, and while she was labouring in the hay-field with other members of the family, a sudden cloud from the northern mountain led Thorodd to anticipate a heavy shower. He instantly commanded the hay-workers to pile up in ricks the quantity which each had been engaged in turning to the wind. It was afterwards remembered that Thorgunna did not pile up her portion, but left it spread on the field. The cloud approached with great celerity, and sunk so heavily around the farm, that it was scarce possible to see beyond the limits of the field. A heavy shower next descended, and so soon as the clouds broke away, and the sun shone forth, it was observed that it had rained blood. That part of the portentous shower which fell upon the ricks of the other labourers soon dried up, but the hay which Thorgunna had wrought upon remained wet with gore.

The unfortunate Hebridean, appalled at the omen, betook herself to her bed, and was seized with a mortal illness. On the approach of death she summoned Thorodd, her land-

lord, and entrusted to him the disposition of her property and effects. "Let my body," said she, "be transported to Skalholt, for my mind presages that in that place shall be founded the most distinguished church in this island. Let my golden ring be given to the priests who shall celebrate my obsequies, and do thou indemnify thyself for the funeral charges out of my remaining effects. To thy wife I bequeath my purple mantle, in order that, by this sacrifice to her avarice, I may secure the right of disposing of the rest of my effects at my own pleasure. But for my bed, with its coverings, hangings, and furniture, I entreat they may all be consigned to the flames. I do not desire this because I envy any one the possession of these things after my death, but because I wish those evils to be avoided which I plainly foresee will happen if my will be altered in the slightest particular."

Thorodd promised faithfully to execute this extraordinary testament in the most pointed manner.

Accordingly, as soon as Thorgunna was dead, her faithful executor prepared a pile for burning her splendid bed. Thurida entered, and learned with anger and astonishment the purpose of these preparations. To the remonstrances of her husband she answered, that the menaces of future danger were only caused by Thorgunna's selfish envy, who did

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not wish that any one should enjoy her treasures after her decease. Then, finding Thorodd inaccessible to argument, she had recourse to caresses and blandishments, and at length extorted permission to separate from the rest of the bed-furniture, the tapestried curtains and coverlid: the rest was consigned to the flames, in obedience to the will of the testator.

The body of Thorgunna being wrapped in new linen, and placed in a coffin, was next to be transported through the precipices and morasses of Iceland to the distant district she had assigned for the place of sepulture. A remarkable incident occurred on the way. The transporters of the body arrived at evening late, weary, and drenched with rain, in a house called Nether-Ness, where the niggard hospitality of the proprietor only afforded them house-room, without any supply of food or fuel. But so soon as they entered, an unwonted noise was heard in the kitchen of the mansion, and the figure of a woman, soon recognised to be the deceased Thorgunna, was seen busily employed in preparing victuals. Their inhospitable landlord being made acquainted with this frightful apparition, readily agreed to supply every refreshment which was necessary, on which the vision instantly disappeared. The apparition having become public, those who accompanied the

body had no reason to ask twice for hospitality, as they proceeded on their journey, and arrived safely at Skalholt, where Thorgunna, with all due ceremonies of religion, was deposited quietly in the grave. But the consequences of the breach of her testament were felt severely at Froda.

The author, for the better understanding of the prodigies which happened, describes the manner of living at Froda; a simple and patriarchal structure, built according to the fashion used by the wealthy among the Icelanders. The eating apartment was very large, and a part boarded off contained the beds of the family. On either side was a sort of store-room, one of which contained meal, the other dried fish. Every evening large fires were lighted in this apartment, for dressing the victuals; and the domestics of the family usually sat around them for a considerable time, until supper was prepared. On the night when the conductors of Thorgunna's funeral returned to Froda, there appeared, visible to all who were present, a meteor, or spectral appearance, resembling a half-moon, which glided around the boarded walls of the mansion, in an opposite direction to the course of the sun,¹ and continued to perform its revolu-

¹ This is an important circumstance. Whatever revolved with the sun was reckoned a fortunate movement. Thus, the Highlanders in making the *deasil*, a sort of benediction

tions until the domestics retired to rest. This apparition was renewed every night during a whole week, and was pronounced by Thorer with the wooden leg, to presage pestilence or mortality. Shortly after, a herdsman showed signs of mental alienation, and gave various indications of having sustained the persecution of evil demons. This man was found dead in his bed one morning, and then commenced a scene of ghost-seeing unheard of in the annals of superstition.

The first victim was Thorer, who had presaged the calamity. Going out of doors one evening, he was grappled by the spectre of the deceased shepherd as he attempted to re-enter the house. His wooden leg stood him in poor stead in such an encounter; he was hurled to the earth, and so fearfully beaten, that he died in consequence of the bruises. Thorer was no sooner dead, than his ghost associated itself to that of the herdsman, and joined him in pursuing and assaulting the inhabitants of Froda. Meantime an infectious

which they bestow in walking round the party to be propitiated, always observe the course of the sun. And witches, on the other hand, made their circles, *widdershins*, as the Scottish dialect expresses it (*widder-sins* Germ.), or in opposition to the course of the orb of light. The apparition of the half-moon reminds us of Hecate, of the mysteries of Isis in Apuleius, and of a passage in Lucian's "Liars," where the moon is forced down by magical invocation.

disorder spread fast amongst them, and several of the bondsmen died one after the other. Strange portents were seen within doors, the meal was displaced and mingled, and the dried fish flung about in a most alarming manner, without any visible agent. At length, while the servants were forming their evening circle round the fire, a spectre, resembling the head of a seal-fish, was seen to emerge out of the pavement of the room, bending its round black eyes full on the tapestried bed-curtains of Thorgunna. Some of the domestics ventured to strike at this figure, but far from giving way to their efforts, it rather erected itself further from the floor, until Kiartan, who seemed to have a natural predominance over these supernatural prodigies, seizing a huge forge-hammer, struck the seal repeatedly on the head, and compelled it to disappear, forcing it down into the floor, as if he had driven a stake into the earth.

This prodigy was found to intimate a new calamity. Thorodd, the master of the family, had some time before set forth on a voyage to bring home a cargo of dried fish; but, in crossing the river Enna, the skiff was lost, and he perished, with the servants who attended him. A solemn funeral feast was held at Froda, in memory of the deceased, when to the astonishment of the guests, the apparitions of Thorodd and his followers seemed to enter

the apartment dripping with water. Yet this vision excited less horror than might have been expected; for the Icelanders, though nominally Christians, retained, among other pagan superstitions, a belief that the spectres of such drowned persons as had been favourably received by the goddess Rana, were wont to show themselves at their funeral feast. They saw, therefore, with some composure, Thorodd, and his dripping attendants, plant themselves by the fire, from which all mortal guests retreated to make room for them.

It was supposed this apparition would not be renewed after the conclusion of the festival. But so far were their hopes disappointed, that, so soon as the mourning guests had departed, the fires being lighted, Thorodd and his comrades marched in on one side, drenched as before with water; on the other entered Thorer, heading all those who had died in the pestilence, and who appeared covered with dust. Both parties occupied the seats by the fire, while the half-frozen and terrified domestics spent the night without either light or warmth. The same phenomenon took place the next night though the fires had been lighted in a separate house, and at length Kiartan was obliged to compound matters with the spectres by kindling a large fire for them in the principal apartment, and one for the family and domestics in a separate hut. This pro-

digy continued during the whole feast of Jol. Other portents also happened to appal this devoted family. The contagious disease again broke forth, and when any one fell a sacrifice to it, his spectre was sure to join the troop of persecutors, who had now almost full possession of the mansion of Froda. Thorgrima Galldrakinna, wife of Thorer, was one of these victims, and in short, of thirty servants belonging to the household, eighteen died, and five fled for fear of the apparitions; so that only seven remained in the service of Kiartan.

Kiartan had now recourse to the advice of his maternal uncle Snorro, in consequence of whose counsel, what will perhaps appear surprising to the reader, judicial measures were instituted against the spectres. A Christian priest was, however, associated with Thordo Kausa, son of Snorro, and with Kiartan, to superintend and sanctify the proceedings. The inhabitants were regularly summoned to attend upon the inquest, as in a cause between man and man, and the assembly was constituted before the gate of the mansion, just as the spectres had assumed their wonted station by the fire. Kiartan boldly ventured to approach them, and snatching a brand from the fire, he commanded the tapestry belonging to Thorgunna to be carried out of doors, set fire to it, and reduced it to ashes with all the other ornaments of her bed, which had been so in-

considerately preserved at the request of Thurida. A tribunal being then constituted with the usual legal solemnities,¹ a charge was preferred by Kiartan against Thorer with the wooden leg, by Thordo Kausa against Thorodd, and by others chosen as accusers against the individual spectres present, accusing them of molesting the mansion, and introducing death and disease amongst its inhabitants. All the solemn rites of judicial procedure were observed on this singular occasion; evidence was adduced, charges given, and the cause formally decided. It does not appear that the ghosts put themselves on their defence, so that sentence of ejection was pronounced against them individually and in due and legal form.

When Thorer heard the judgment, he arose, and saying, "I have sate while it was lawful for me to do so," left the apartment by the door opposite to that at which the judicial assembly was constituted. Each of the spectres, as they heard their individual sentence, left the place, saying something which indicated their unwillingness, until Thorodd himself was so-

¹ It does not appear that the judges in Iceland were a separate order. On the contrary, every tribunal appears to have been constituted by a selection, *ex astantibus*, and so far every court of justice resembled a jury chosen to decide a special cause, and dissolved when that task was performed.

lemnly appointed to depart. "We have here no longer," said he, "a peaceful dwelling, therefore will we remove."

Kiartan then entered the hall with his followers, and the priest with holy water, and celebration of a solemn mass, completed the conquest over the goblins, which had been commenced by the power and authority of the Icelandic law.

We have perhaps dwelt too long on this legend, but it is the only instance in which the ordinary administration of justice has been supposed to extend over the inhabitants of another world, and in which the business of exorcising spirits is transferred from the priest to the judge. Joined to the various instances in the Eyrbyggja-Saga, of a certain regard to the forms of jurisprudence, even amid the wildest of their feuds, it seems to argue the extraordinary influence ascribed to municipal law by this singular people, even in the very earliest state of society.

Snorro, who upon the whole may be considered as the hero of the history, was led into fresh turmoils and litigation by the death of his brother-in-law, Styr, slain by the inhabitants of a neighbouring district, for which slaughter neither Snorro's eloquence in the popular assembly, nor his power in the field, were able to procure adequate vengeance.

He came off with more credit in his feud with Ospakar.

This Ospakar, a man of huge stature, and great personal strength, surrounded always by satellites of the same description, differed from the other Icelandic chiefs, in the open disregard which he professed for the laws of property. He kept a stout vessel, always ready for piratical excursions, and surrounded his house with a mound so as to convert it into a kind of citadel. It happened that a whale had been cast ashore upon a part of the island where the law assigned a part of it in property to the pontiff Snorro, and part to his neighbour Thorer. While, however, Thorer, and Alfar, called the Little, steward of the pontiff, were engaged in making the partition, Ospakar appeared at the head of his armed followers, and, after stunning Thorer with a blow of his war-axe, appropriated the whole whale to himself. Skirmish followed skirmish, and blood was spilled on both sides, until Snorro bestirred himself in invoking the justice of the Comitia against the lawless Ospakar, and obtained a sentence condemning him and his followers to banishment. They submitted to this doom for a time, and Snorro caused the effects of Ospakar to be divided among those who had sustained the greatest losses by his rapine, of which spoil Thorer and Alfar ob-

tained the largest share. It was, however, a gift fatal to the former. Ospakar, who still followed his piratical profession, made a sudden descent on the coast, and seizing Thorer, put him to death before his own door. Alfar escaping with difficulty, fled to the protection of Snorro; and Ospakar, in defiance of the sentence pronounced against him, resumed possession of his fortified mansion, and furnished it with provisions to stand a siege. Snorro proceeded on this occasion with his characteristic caution. It has been seen that an ordinary hay-stack was accounted a strong post in Icelandic tactics, but a house surrounded with a bank of earth was a much more respectable fortification; nor did Snorro deem it safe to attempt storming the pirate's stronghold, till he had assembled his most chosen friends and satellites.

Amongst these was Thrandar, who, before assuming the Christian faith, had been a Bersarkar, and although he had lost the supernatural strength exercised by such persons, which the author states to have been the usual consequence of baptism, probably because the christened champion disused the intoxicating drugs which excited his fierce exertions, he nevertheless retained his natural vigour and prowess, which were very formidable.

On the slightest hint from Snorro's messenger, Thrandar attended the pontiff, armed as

one who has a dangerous task in hand. Snorro's other allies being assembled, they made a hasty march to the fortress of Ospakar, and summoned him to surrender at discretion. The robber having refused compliance, the mound was valiantly assaulted on the one part, and stoutly defended on the other. Thrandar, by striking the steel of his battle-axe into the top of the rampart, actually scaled it, raising himself by the handle, and slew Rafen, a pirate of great fame, who assaulted him upon his ascent. Ospakar himself fell by a stroke of a lance, and his followers surrendered upon the sole condition of escaping with life and limb. On this conflict, the Scald Thormodar composed his poem called Rafn-maal, or the Death of Rafen.

The birds of Odin found their prey,
When slaughter raged in Bitra's bay;
There lay extended on the vale
The three fierce plunderers of the whale,
And, all his toils of rapine past,
Grim Rafen found repose at last.

After the death of the gallant Arnkill, the spirit of his father Thorolf Bægifot, or the Crookfooted, began, as before hinted, again to be troublesome. He issued by night from the mound which had been heaped over them, and wandered through the country, blighting crops, laming cattle, and terrifying the inhabitants to the uttermost, so that there was risk

of the whole country being rendered uninhabitable. General complaints on this subject being made to Thorodd, he resolved to take measures for putting to rest that sullen and implacable spirit.

Having carried a party of men along with him, Thorodd ascended the ridge on which Arnkill had entombed his father's body. The mound which was piled over it was next opened, and the body of Thorolf was found undecayed, but swollen to the size of an ox; with a countenance horrible to behold, and livid as the darkness of hell. As it was evident that the spirit of the resentful suicide, or some evil fiend in its place, made use of his mortal remains, like the Hungarian vampire, to commit his nightly enormities, Thorodd resolved to proceed on this supposition. Accordingly, he commanded the body to be removed from the tomb, which, such was its portentous weight, could only be done by means of levers. Next, he caused the accursed corpse to be removed to the sea-shore, and there laid upon a large pile of blazing wood, and consumed. It was long ere this could be accomplished, for the fire seemed for some time to have no influence over Thorolf. He was, however, at length reduced to ashes, which were partly dispersed in the wind, and partly thrown into the sea. After this, the Crook-footed Spectre was not again seen, and

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yet his reliques continued to occasion fresh prodigies.

“¹ It was milking-time, about nine in the evening, when Thorodd returned from the burning of Thorolf's body; and as he rode towards the stable, a cow, running before him, broke her foot. The cow, which was barren, was taken; and, being too lean to be slaughtered, Thorodd caused her foot to be bound up; and, as soon as it was strong enough, she was sent to Ulfarsfell to be fattened, as the pasture there was as good as on the holms. While at pasture there, the cow often went down to the sea-shore, where the funeral pile of Thorolf Bægifot had been built, and licked the stones on the sea-beach, on which the wind had scattered part of the ashes. There are some who say that the islanders, when carrying their dried fish to the inner part of the creek, saw with the cow, as she was feeding upon the side of the fell, a strange bull of a mouse-colour, that nobody knew. Next au-

¹ The following legend of the Elf Bull was omitted in the original sketch of this little work, because the story occurred in another part of the Northern Antiquities, in illustration of the curious Danish ballad of Rosmer Hafmand. It is now restored to the work of which it is a part; and it is proper to say, that the legend is given, with the exception of some of the rhimes, from the version of Mr Robert Jamieson, by whom it was translated from the Icelandic.

tumn Thorodd thought of killing the cow; but those who were sent to fetch her could nowhere find her. After much search to no purpose, they at last gave her up for lost, supposing she must either have been dead or stolen. A little before the *Iol*-time, one morning as the neat-herd at Kørstead was going as usual to the cow-house, he saw the broken-footed cow, that had been so industriously sought for, standing before the door. Turning her into the cow-house, and tying her up, he carried the news to Thorodd, who, entering the cow-house, and viewing and handling the cow, discovered that she was with calf, and therefore not fit for a mart, especially as he had flesh enough besides for his family. About the end of the following spring, she had a *quey*-calf, and shortly after a bull-calf, which was so large that the cow died soon after calving. This large bull-calf was brought into the house; it was of a mouse-colour, and seemed well worth preserving. When the calves were carried into the room, there happened to be present an old carline, who had been foster-mother to Thorodd, and was now become blind. In her younger days she had been reputed to have the second-sight; but as she grew old, her predictions were regarded as the ravings of dotage, although many of them were verified by the events. The calf, with his legs bound, being laid on the floor,

bellowed aloud, on which the carline, in the greatest terror, cried out, 'That is the low of an Elf's imp, and of no earthly creature; and you will do well to destroy it immediately!' Thorodd said it would be a pity to kill such a fine calf, which, if properly taken care of, must turn out an excellent steer. The calf then lowed a second time; on which the carline threw away what she had in her hand, and said, «My bairn! let the calf be killed; for if he is brought up, we shall all one day have great cause to rue it.»—«Well, nurse, since you will have it so,» said Thorodd, «he shall be killed.» Both calves were then taken out of the room, and Thorodd gave orders to kill the *quey*, and carry the bull into the barn, to be brought up with strict injunctions that nobody should undeceive the old nurse.

«This bull-calf grew so fast, that before spring he was full as large as those that had been calved several months before him. When let out, he ran very much about the meadow, and roared like a full-grown bull, so loud that it was heard in the house. Then the carline said, 'As this monster is not killed, he will assuredly do us more mischief than words can express!'—The calf grew apace, and that summer was turned into a field of saved grass; and by autumn, he was so large that few year-olds could match him. He was well-horned, and of all the cattle the most sleek and beau-

tiful to see, and was thence called *Glæsir*. Before he was two years old he was as large as a five-year-old ox; fed mostly among the cows, not far from the house; and as often as Thorodd went into the fold, Glæsir went up and smelled him, and licked his clothes, and Thorodd patted him. He was gentle as a lamb both to men and cattle; but when he roared, it was tremendous, and the old woman never heard it without expressing the greatest consternation and horror. When Glæsir was four years old, if women, or children, or stripplings went near him, he took no notice of them; but if men passed, he chafed and threatened, and was so surly and unruly that he would hardly suffer himself to be driven out of the way.

« Glæsir continuing to be unmanageable, and to roar as terribly as ever, Thorodd, moved by the continual warnings and apprehensions of his nurse, promised in good earnest to slaughter him next autumn, as soon as he should be fat enough. But the old spæ-wife tells him that it will be too late; and again hearing him bellow fiercely, she broke forth, as usual among the Icelanders, into a sort of poetic rapture—

The horned monarch of the herd
Threats death to men of middle eard;
He bends his brows and shakes his head,
Betokening blood that he shall shed.

To thee these hideous bellowings say,
That ere the winning of the hay,
The sullen monster dooms thy death—
Sooth are the words the spae-wife saith.

« ‘You doat, nurse,’ replied Thorodd, ‘instead of prophesying.’ To which she replied—

Ay, if her tongue the old wife wag,
They’ll call her but a doating hag.
But on thy bloody breast I see
A wound unseen, unfelt by thee.
This bull looks harmfully on men,
And I—a doating woman—ken,
That while the hay is in the swathe,
Glæsir shall do thee unto death.

« So it fell out, that same summer, that one day after Thorodd had got the hay in the hay-field raked together, and made up into cocks, there fell a great deal of rain. Next morning, the servants going out observed Glæsir in the hay-field, disencumbered from the board which since he became vicious had been fastened upon his horns, running about, overturning the cocks, and scattering the hay all over the field, which he had never been accustomed to do; at the same time that his roarings and bellowings so terrified the servants, that no one durst venture to go and drive him away. On their telling Thorodd

what Glæsir was doing, he ran out, and snatching up a large birchen stake by the two forks, hastened into the field, with that weapon over his shoulder, to attack the bull. Glæsir, seeing this, desisted from the havoc which he was making, and advanced to meet his master, regardless of his threats, and the noise he made to intimidate him. On this Thorodd struck him so hard between the horns, that the stake broke short close by the forks. Glæsir then rushed upon Thorodd, who, seizing him by the horns, turned his head aside; and in this manner they struggled for some time, Glæsir always pushing, and Thorodd avoiding, till the latter began to be fatigued. Then Thorodd leaping upon his neck, and leaning over between his horns, clasped his hands under his throat, which he griped with all his might, in hopes of stifling him or tiring him out; and in this manner the bull ran about the field, carrying him upon his neck.

« The servants seeing their master in such danger, and, being weaponless, not daring to interfere, ran home to arm themselves, and returned with spears and other weapons. When the bull saw that, he stooped his head between his legs, and shook it till he got one of his horns under Thorodd, then raised it with a jerk so suddenly, that he threw up Thorodd's legs, so that he stood almost upon

his head upon the bull's neck. When his legs fell down again, Glæsir stooped his head once more, and struck him with his other horn in the belly, goring him so dreadfully that he let go his hold, and the bull, roaring tremendously, ran along the meadow towards the river. The servants pursued him through a ravine of the mountain called Geirvaur, till he reached a fen below the farm-stead of Hello, where he ran into a pool, dived, and never after came up again; and ever since, the fen has been called Glæciskellda.—Returning to the house, they found Thorodd dead of his wound.”¹

The Annals proceed to inform us of the death of Snorro, during the winter after the death of St Olave, leaving a powerful and flourishing family to support the fame which he had acquired. He was buried in the church at Tunga, which he himself had founded; but when it was removed, his bones were trans-

¹ Referring the curious to the notes of Mr Jamieson, it is only necessary to say here, that no tradition is so universal in the Scottish highlands and lowlands, as well as in Ireland, as the belief in a water-bull; a creature in some degree supernatural, but yet in part supposed to be a creature of this world. In their belief of its qualities and habits, the people among whom the legend is current, agree with wonderful correctness; so that it would almost seem that these reports have been founded on the existence, at a very distant period, of some species of amphibious animal, which has now become extinct.

ported to its new site. From these relics the celebrated Snorro seemed to have been a man of ordinary stature; nor, indeed, does it anywhere appear that he attained the ascendancy which he possessed in the island by personal strength, but rather by that subtlety of spirit which he displayed in conducting his enterprises, and by his address and eloquence in the popular assembly. Although often engaged in feuds, his valour seems to have been duly mingled with discretion; and the deeds of war for which he was celebrated in poetry, were usually achieved by the strong arm of some ally or satellite. He was so equal in his demeanour, that it was difficult to observe what pleased or displeased him; slow and cautious in resolving upon revenge, but tenacious and implacable in pursuing it; an excellent counsellor to his friends, but skilful in inducing his enemies to take measures which afterwards proved fatal to them. In fine, as the ecclesiastical historian of Iceland sums up his attributes, if Snorro were not a good and pious man, he was to be esteemed wise, prudent, and sagacious, beyond the usual pitch of humanity. This pontiff, or prefect, is mentioned with great distinction in other Icelandic chronicles, as well as in the *Eyrbyggja-Saga*. In the *LANDNAMA BOK*, part II, chapter 13, many of the foregoing incidents are alluded to, and

also in the LAXDÆLA-SAGA, and the SAGA of OLUF TRYGGASON.

That such a character, partaking more of the jurisconsult or statesman than of the warrior, should have risen so high at such an early period, argues the preference which the Icelanders already assigned to mental superiority over the rude attributes of strength and courage, and furnishes another proof of the early civilization of this extraordinary commonwealth. In other respects the character of Snorro was altogether unamiable, and blended with strong traits of the savage. Cunning and subtlety supplied the place of wisdom, and an earnest and uniform attention to his own interests often, as in the dispute between Arnkill and his father, superseded the ties of blood and friendship. Still, however, his selfish conduct seems to have been of more service to the settlement in which he swayed, than would have been that of a generous and high-spirited warrior who acted from the impulse of momentary passion. His ascendancy, though acquired by means unworthy of praise, seems, in his petty canton, to have had the effect produced by that of Augustus in the Roman Empire; although, more guiltless than the emperor of the world, the pontiff of Helgafels neither subverted the liberties of his country, nor bequeathed the domination he had acquired to

a tyrannical successor. His sons succeeded to the paternal property, but not to the political power of their father; and his possessions being equally divided amongst them, they founded several families, long respected in Iceland as descendants of the pontiff Snorro.

ABBOTSFORD, *October 13, 1813.*

DEATH OF THE LAIRD'S JOCK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE KEEPSAKE.

You have asked me, Sir, to point out a subject for the pencil, and I feel the difficulty of complying with your request; although I am not certainly unaccustomed to literary composition, or a total stranger to the stores of history and tradition, which afford the best copies for the painter's art. But although *sicut pictura poesis* is an ancient and undisputed axiom, although poetry and painting both address themselves to the same object of exciting human imagination, by presenting to it 'pleasing or sublime images of ideal scenes; yet the one conveying itself through the ears to the understanding, and the other applying itself only to the eyes, the subjects which are best

suited to the bard or tale-teller are often totally unfit for painting, where the artist must present in a single glance all that his art has power to tell us. The artist can neither recapitulate the past nor intimate the future. The single «now» is all which he can present; and hence, unquestionably, many subjects which delight us in poetry or in narrative, whether real or fictitious, cannot with advantage be transferred to the canvas.

Being in some degree aware of these difficulties, though doubtless unacquainted both with their extent, and the means by which they may be modified or surmounted, I have, nevertheless, ventured to draw up the following traditional narrative as a story in which, when the general details are known, the interest is so much concentrated in one strong moment of agonizing passion, that it can be understood, and sympathized with, at a single glance. I therefore presume that it may be acceptable as a hint to some one among the numerous artists, who have of late years distinguished themselves as rearing up and supporting the British school.

Enough has been said and sung about

The well-contested ground,
The warlike border-land—

to render the habits of the tribes who inhabited them before the union of England and Scotland

familiar to most of your readers. The rougher and sterner features of their character were softened by their attachment to the fine arts, from which has arisen the saying that, on the frontiers, every dale had its battle, and every river its song. A rude species of chivalry was in constant use, and single combats were practised as the amusement of the few intervals of truce which suspended the exercise of war. The inveteracy of this custom may be inferred from the following incident:—

Bernard Gilpin, the apostle of the North, the first who undertook to preach the Protestant doctrines to the Border dalesmen, was surprised, on entering one of their churches, to see a gauntlet or mail-glove hanging above the altar. Upon inquiring the meaning of a symbol so indecorous being displayed in that sacred place, he was informed by the clerk that the glove was that of a famous swordsman, who hung it there as an emblem of a general challenge and gage of battle, to any who should dare to take the fatal token down. "Reach it to me," said the reverend churchman. The clerk and sexton equally declined the perilous office, and the good Bernard Gilpin was obliged to remove the glove with his own hands, desiring those who were present to inform the champion that he, and no other, had possessed himself of the gage of

defiance. But the champion was as much ashamed to face Bernard Gilpin as the officials of the church had been to displace his pledge of combat.

The date of the following story is about the latter years of Queen Elizabeth's reign; and the events took place in Liddesdale, a hilly and pastoral district of Roxburghshire, which, on a part of its boundary, is divided from England only by a small river.

During the good old times of *rugging and riving* (that is, tugging and tearing), under which term the disorderly doings of the warlike age are affectionately remembered, this valley was principally cultivated by the sept or clan of the Armstrongs. The chief of this warlike race was the Laird of Mangerton. At the period of which I speak, the estate of Mangerton, with the power and dignity of chief, was possessed by John Armstrong, a man of great size, strength, and courage. While his father was alive, he was distinguished from others of his clan who bore the same name, by the epithet of the "Laird's Jock," that is to say, the Laird's son Jock or Jack. This name he distinguished by so many bold and desperate achievements, that he retained it even after his father's death, and is mentioned under it both in authentic records and in tradition. Some of his feats are recorded in the

Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, and others mentioned in contemporary chronicles.

At the species of singular combat which we have described the Laird's Jock was unrivalled; and no champion of Cumberland, Westmoreland, or Northumberland could endure the sway of the huge two-handed sword which he wielded, and which few others could even lift. This « awful sword,» as the common people term it, was as dear to him as Durindana or Fushberta to their respective masters, and was near as formidable to his enemies as those renowned falchions proved to the foes of Christendom. The weapon had been bequeathed to him by a celebrated English outlaw, named Hobbie Noble, who, having committed some deed for which he was in danger from justice, fled to Liddesdale, and became a follower, or rather a brother-in-arms to the renowned Laird's Jock, till, venturing into England with a small escort, a faithless guide, and with a light single-handed sword instead of his ponderous brand, Hobbie Noble, attacked by superior numbers, was made prisoner and executed.

With this weapon, and by means of his own strength and address, the Laird's Jock maintained the reputation of the best swordsman on the border-side, and defeated or slew many who ventured to dispute with him the formidable title.

But years pass on with the strong and the brave as with the feeble and timid. In process of time the Laird's Jock grew incapable of wielding his weapons, and finally of all active exertion, even of the ordinary kind. The disabled champion became at length totally bed-ridden, and entirely dependent for his comfort on the pious duties of an only daughter, his perpetual attendant and companion.

Besides this dutiful child, the Laird's Jock had an only son, upon whom devolved the perilous task of leading the clan to battle, and maintaining the warlike renown of his native country, which was now disputed by the English upon many occasions. The young Armstrong was active, brave, and strong, and brought home from dangerous adventures many tokens of decided success. Still the ancient chief conceived, as it would seem, that his son was scarce yet entitled by age and experience to be intrusted with the two-handed sword, by the use of which he had himself been so dreadfully distinguished.

At length, an English champion, one of the name of Foster (if I rightly recollect), had the audacity to send a challenge to the best swordsman in Liddesdale; and young Armstrong, burning for chivalrous distinction, accepted the challenge.

The heart of the disabled old man swelled

with joy, when he heard that the challenge was passed and accepted, and the meeting fixed at a neutral spot, used as a place of rencontre upon such occasions, and which he himself had distinguished by several victories. He exulted so much in the conquest which he anticipated, that, to nerve his son to still bolder exertions, he conferred upon him, as champion of his clan and province, the celebrated weapon which he had hitherto retained in his own custody.

This was not all. When the day of combat arrived, the Laird's Jock, in spite of his daughter's affectionate remonstrances, determined, though he had not left his bed for two years, to be a personal witness of the duel. His will was still a law to his people; who bore him on their shoulders, wrapt in plaids and blankets, to the spot where the combat was to take place, and seated him on a fragment of rock, which is still called the Laird Jock's Stone. There he remained with eyes fixed on the lists or barrier, within which the champions were about to meet. His daughter, having done all she could for his accommodation, stood motionless beside him, divided between anxiety for his health, and for the event of the combat to her beloved brother. Ere yet the fight began, the old men gazed on their chief, now seen for the first time after

several years, and sadly compared his altered features and wasted frame, with the paragon of strength and manly beauty which they had once remembered. The young gazed on his large form and powerful make, as upon some antediluvian giant who had survived the destruction of the deluge.

But the sound of trumpets on both sides recalled the attention of every one to the lists, surrounded as they were by numbers of both nations, eager to witness the event of the day. The combatants met in the lists. It is needless to describe the struggle: the Scottish champion fell. Foster, placing his foot on his antagonist, seized on the redoubted sword, so precious in the eyes of its aged owner, and brandished it over his head as a trophy of his conquest. The English shouted in triumph. But the despairing cry of the aged champion, who saw his country dishonoured, and his sword, long the terror of their race, in possession of an Englishman, was heard high above the acclamations of victory. He seemed, for an instant, animated by all his wonted power; for he started from the rock on which he sate, and while the garments with which he had been invested fell from his wasted frame, and showed the ruins of his strength, he tossed his arms wildly to heaven, and uttered a cry of indignation, horror, and despair, which, tradition says, was

‘IOF’ : ‘IOF’ : ‘IOF’

‘IOF’ : ‘IOF’ : ‘IOF’ : ‘IOF’

heard to a preternatural distance, and resembled the cry of a dying lion more than a human sound.

His friends received him in their arms as he sunk utterly exhausted by the effort, and bore him back to his castle in mute sorrow; while his daughter at once wept for her brother, and endeavoured to mitigate and soothe the despair of her father. But this was impossible; the old man's only tie to life was rent rudely asunder, and his heart had broken with it. The death of his son had no part in his sorrow, if he thought of him at all, it was as the degenerate boy, through whom the honour of country and clan had been lost; and he died in the course of three days, never even mentioning his name, but pouring out unintermitted lamentations for the loss of his noble sword.

I conceive, that the moment when the disabled chief was roused into a last exertion by the agony of the moment, is favourable to the object of a painter. He might obtain the full advantage of contrasting the form of the rugged old man, in the extremity of furious despair, with the softness and beauty of the female form. The fatal field might be thrown into perspective, so as to give full effect to these two principal figures; and with the single explanation, that the piece represented a soldier beholding his son slain, and the honour of his

country lost, the picture would be sufficiently intelligible at the first glance. If it was thought necessary to show more clearly the nature of the conflict, it might be indicated by the pennon of Saint George being displayed at one end of the lists, and that of Saint Andrew at the other.

I remain, Sir, Your obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.

MOLIÈRE¹.

It will be universally admitted, that in tragic performances nothing can be more distinctly different than the laws which regulate the French and English stage. The dissimilarity is so great, that a native of either country, however candid or liberal, must have studied with some attention the literature of the other, to enable him, not merely to relish, but even to endure the tragedies of the neighbouring kingdom. A Parisian critic would be shocked at the representation of *Hamlet au naturel*, and the most patient spectator in a Drury Lane audience would incur some risk of dislocating his jaws with yawning, during the representation of a chef-d'œuvre of Racine or Corneille. This difference betwixt the taste of two highly civilized nations is not surprising, when we consider that the English tragedy existed a hundred years at least before the French, and is therefore censured by our neighbours as partaking, to a certain extent, of the barbarity

¹ From the *Foreign Quarterly Review*.

and grossness of the age of Queen Elizabeth. The two great tragedians of France, on the contrary, had the task of entertaining a polished and highly ceremonious court, whose judgment was at least as fastidious as it was correct, and in whose eyes a breach of etiquette was a more formidable crime than any deficiency in spirit or genius.

Thus the English stage exhibited in word and in action every « change of many-coloured life, » mingled the tragic with the comic, the ludicrous with the horrible, seized by storm on the applause of the half-startled, half-affrighted audience, and presented to the judgment, like Salvator's landscapes to the eye, a chaos of the wonderful, mixed with the grotesque, agitating the passions too strongly to leave time to inquire whether the rules of critical taste were not frequently violated. The French stage, on the other hand, is carefully and exactly limited by a sense of decorum, which, exercised in its rigour, may be called the tyranny of taste. It is not lawful to please, says this dramatic code, unless by observance of certain arbitrary rules: or to create a deeper and a more intense interest, than a strict obedience to the precepts of Aristotle and his modern commentators will permit. The English authors have therefore preferred exhibiting striking incidents and extraordinary characters placed in violent contrast, at the risk

of shocking probability; and their keenest partisans must own, that they have been often absurd, when they aimed at being sublime. The French, on the other hand, limiting themselves in general to long dramatic dialogues, in which passion is rather analyzed than displayed, have sometimes become tedious by a display of ingenuity, where the spectator expected touches of feeling. It follows as a matter of course, that each country, partial to the merits of its own style of amusement, and struck with the faults which belong to a cast of composition so extremely different, is as severe in censuring the foreign stage, as it is indulgent in judging of its own. Two important questions arise out of this: first, whether, considering the many differences betwixt the taste both of nations and individuals, either country is entitled to condemn with acrimony the favourite authors of the other, merely because they did not hit a mark against which they never directed their arrows? and, secondly, whether there may not remain to be trodden, by some splendid genius yet to be born, some middle path, which may attain the just mean betwixt that English freedom approaching to license, and the severe system of French criticism, that sometimes cramps and subjects the spirit which it is only designed to guide or direct?

Happily for us, our present subject does not

require us to prosecute an inquiry so delicate as that which we have been led to touch upon. The difference in the national tastes of France and England, so very remarkable when we compare the tragedies of the two countries, is much less conspicuous in their comic dramas; where, setting aside their emancipation from the tenets of the Stagyrte, the English comic writers do or ought to, propose to themselves the same object with the French of the same class. As a proof of this, we may remark, that very few French tragedies have ever been translated, and of these few (the *Zaire* of Voltaire excepted) still fewer have become permanently popular, or have been reckoned stock-plays,—whereas the English authors, from the age of the great man of whom we are about to speak, down to the present day, have been in the habit of transferring to the British stage almost all the comedies which have been well received in France. How it happens, that two nations which differ so much in their estimation of the terrible or the pathetic, should agree so exactly in their sense of the gay, the witty, and the humorous, is a different question, which we are not called upon to discuss very deeply. Lord Chesterfield, however, has long since remarked (with the invidious intention of silencing an honest laugh) that laughter is a vulgar convulsion, common to all men, and that a ridiculous incident, such as the member

of a company attempting to sit down when he has no chair behind him, will create a louder peal of mirth than could be excited by the most brilliant sally of wit. We go no further with his lordship than to agree, that the sense of the comic is far more general among mankind, and far less altered and modified by the artificial rules of society, than that of the pathetic; and that a hundred men of different ranks or different countries will laugh at the same jest, when not five of them perhaps would blend their tears over the same point of sentiment. Take, for example, the Dead Ass of Sterne, and reflect how few would join in feeling the pathos of that incident, in comparison with the numbers who would laugh in chorus till their eyes ran over at the too lively steed of the redoubtable John Gilpin. The moralist may regard this fact, either as a sign of our corrupted nature, to which the ludicrous feeling of the comic distress of a fellow-creature is more congenial than a sympathy with his actual miseries,—or as a proof of the kindness of Providence, which, placing us in a valley of sorrows, has enabled us, from our conformation, to be readily moved by such mirth-exciting circumstances as it affords, and by this propensity to counteract the depression of spirits occasioned by all that is gloomy and melancholy around us. To us it is enough to be assured, that the universal sense of the humorous

renders such a complete master of comedy as Molière the property, not of that country alone which was honoured with his birth, but of the civilized world, and of England in particular, whose drama has been enriched by versions of so many of his best pieces.

As, however, we suspect that the history of this great author, the prince certainly of comic writers, is but little known to English readers, we shall give a sketch of Molière's life from the interesting and well-told narrative of his recent biographer, M. Taschereau.

Le Menteur of the Great Corneille, known to the British reader under the title of *the Liar*, which appeared in 1642, was perhaps the first approach to the more just and elevated species of comedy. It was, however, a translation from the Spanish, and although it must be termed a comedy founded upon character, in which the whole incidents bear regularly on each other, and tend to enhance the ridicule attached to the foible of the hero, the plot has nevertheless, a strong relish of the old Spanish school, which turned upon disguises, scaling-ladders, dark-lanterns, and trap-doors. The comedies of *Don Bertrand de Cigarral*, and *Le Géôlier de soi-même*, composed by Thomas Corneille, are more distinctly and decidedly comedies of intrigue and bustle, similar to those borrowed from that exhaustless mine, the Spanish drama, where, generally speaking,

at the expense of little save a wild imagination,
the poet

——fill'd the stage with all the crowd
Of fools pursuing, and of fools pursued,
Whose ins and outs no ray of sense discloses,
Whose deepest plot is how to break folks' noses.

We may therefore say, that, relieved occasionally by the lively absurdity of the Italian farce, the comedy of intrigue, depending for its success upon mere stage-trick and strata-gem, had usurped the place of that Thalia, who was to derive her interest by the lectures which she proposed to read upon the human heart and national manners. It was then that Molière arose, to whom we can scarcely hesitate to assign the first place amongst the comic writers of any age or nation.

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin was christened at Paris, 15th January, 1622. His family consisted of decent burghers, who had for two or three generations followed the business of manufacturers of tapestry, or dealers in that commodity. Jean Poquelin, the father of the poet, also enjoyed the office of valet-de-chambre in the royal household. He endeavoured to bring his son up to the same business, but finding that it was totally inconsistent with the taste and temper of the young Jean-Baptiste, he placed him at the Jesuits' College of Clermont,

now the College of Louis-le-Grand. Young Poquelin had scarcely terminated his course of philosophy, when, having obtained the situation of assistant and successor to his father, in his post of valet-de-chambre to the king, he was called on to attend Louis XIII in a tour to Narbonne, which lasted nearly a year. Doubtless, the opportunities which this journey afforded him, of comparing the manners and follies of the royal court and of the city of Paris, with those which he found still existing in the provincial towns, and amongst the rural noblesse, were not lost upon the poet by whose satirical powers they were destined to be immortalized.

On his return to Paris, young Poquelin commenced the study of the law; nay, it appears probable, that he was actually admitted an advocate. But the name of Molière must be added to the long list of those who have become conspicuous for success in the fine arts, having first adopted the pursuit of them in contradiction to the will of their parents; and in whom, according to Voltaire, nature has proved stronger than education.

Instead of frequenting the courts, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin was an assiduous attendant upon such companies of players as then amused the metropolis, and at length placed himself at the head of a society of young men, who began by acting plays for amusement, and ended by per-

forming with a view to emolument. His parents were greatly distressed by the step he had taken. He had plunged himself into a profession which the law pronounced infamous, and nothing short of rising to the very top of it could restore his estimation in society. Whatever internal confidence of success the young Poquelin might himself feel, his chance of being extricated from the degradation to which he had subjected himself must have seemed very precarious to others; and we cannot be surprised that his relations were mortified and displeased with his conduct. To conciliate their prejudices as much as possible, he dropped the appellation of Poquelin, and assumed that of Molière, that he might not tarnish the family name. But with what indifference should we now read the name of Poquelin, had it never been conjoined with that of Molière, devised to supersede and conceal it! It appears that the liberal sentiments of the royal court left Molière in possession of his office, notwithstanding his change of profession.

From the year 1646 to 1653, it is only known that Molière travelled through France as the manager of a company of strolling players. It is said, that with the natural turn of young authors, who are more desirous to combine scenes of strong emotion, than of comic situation, he attempted to produce a tragedy called *The*

Thebaid. Its indifferent success disgusted him with the buskin, and, it may be observed, that in proportion as he affects, in other compositions, any thing approaching to the tragic, his admirable facility of expression seems to abandon him, and he becomes stiff and flat.

In the year 1653 Molière's brilliant comedy of *L'Étourdi* was performed at Lyons, and gave a noble presage of the talents of its illustrious author. The piece is known to English readers by a translation entitled *Sir Martin Marplot*, made originally by the celebrated Duke of Newcastle, and adapted to the stage by the pen of Dryden. The piece turns upon the schemes formed by a clever and intriguing valet to facilitate the union betwixt his master and the heroine of the scene, all of which are successively baffled and disconcerted by the bustling interference of the lover himself. The French original has infinitely the superiority of the English imitation; not only as being the original, but because the character of the luckless lover is drawn with an exquisitely finer pencil. Lélie is an inconsequential, light-headed, gentleman-like coxcomb, but Sir Martin Marplot is a fool. In the English drama, the author seems to have considered his hero as so thoroughly stupid, that he rewards the address of the intriguing domestic with the hand of the lady. The French author gave no occasion for this gross indecorum. *L'Étourdi* was followed by

Le Dépit Amoureux, an admirable entertainment; although the French critics bestow some censure on both for a carelessness of style, to which a foreigner may profess himself indifferent. Both these performances were received with the greatest applause by numerous audiences; and as far as the approbation of provincial theatres could confer reputation, that of Molière was now established.

There was, however, a temptation which threatened to withdraw him from the worship of Thalia. This was an offer on the part of the Prince of Conti, who had been his condisciple at college, to create Molière his secretary. He declined this, on account of his devoted attachment to his own profession, strengthened on this occasion, perhaps, by his knowledge how the place had become vacant. This it seems was by the death of Sarrasin (who had held the office), in consequence of *un mauvais traitement de Monseigneur le Prince de Conti*. In plain English, the Prince had, with the fire-tongs, knocked down his secretary, who never recovered from the effects of the blow. It is probable that, notwithstanding the laurel chaplet worn by Molière, he had little faith in the *Sic evitabile fulmen*.

This was in 1654. He continued to perambulate the provinces with his company for several years longer; in 1658 he returned to Paris, and at last, through the influence of his

patron the Prince of Conti, was introduced to Monsieur, the king's brother, and by him presented to the king and queen. On the 24th of October, his company performed in presence of the royal family, and he obtained the royal license to open a theatre under the title of *Troupe de Monsieur*, in opposition to, or in emulation of, the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The pieces which Molière had already composed were received with great favour, but it was not until 1659, that he commenced the honourable satirical war with folly and affectation which he waged for so many years. It was then that he produced *Les Précieuses Ridicules*.

To understand the purpose of this satirical drama, the English reader must be informed, that there existed at Paris a coterie of women of rank, who pretended to the most exalted refinement of thought, expression, and sentiment. These were waited upon and worshipped by a certain number of men of fashion and several literary characters, who used towards them, in conducting their gallant intercourse, a peculiar strain of high-flown, pedantic gallantry, like that which was formerly in fashion in England, when every maid of honour spoke the affected jargon called Euphuism. This society met in the Hôtel de Rambouillet, under the protection of the marchioness, its mistress. There were amongst them several

persons of real wit and talent, a circumstance which only served to render the false taste which presided in the assembly more whimsically conspicuous. The language which the adepts of this sect piqued themselves on using, was a series of cold, far-fetched, extravagant metaphors and emblems, as remote from good taste as from common sense ; and adorned with flights which resembled those of Cowley and Donne in their love-verses. If wit, as Dr Johnson observes of the metaphysical poets, consists in a combination of dissimilar images—a discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike—the conversation of the Hôtel de Rambouillet had more than enough of it. Their amorous intercourse was all in trope and figure ; the more remote and extravagant so much the more to be applauded. The land of gallantry was graphically illustrated as a country through which the pilgrim-lover travelled, possessing himself successively of the village of *billets-galans*, the hamlet of *billets-doux*, and the castle of *petits soins*. The expressions of real passion are always obvious and intelligible, but this pragmatical association made love without interest or concern ; their courtship was void of tenderness—their sorrow could excite no sympathy ;—it was sufficient that they said what had never, they hoped, been said before. The whole language, or rather jargon of the society, was a succession of

enigmas, the sense of which much resembled the Highlandman's horse, that could not be taken without much labour, and when caught, was not worth the trouble it had given. A dictionary of this galimathias was published by Ribou, in 1661, from which or some similar authority, Bret, the editor of Molière, quotes the following tropes of rhetoric, which cannot easily be rendered into English. A night-cap was called (the reader must divine wherefore) *le complice innocent de mensonge*—a chaplet, *une chaine spirituelle*—water, *l'humeur céleste*—thieves, *les braves incommodes*, and a disdainful smile, *un bouillon d'orgueil*.

It might render this high strain of fashionable affectation more tolerable in one point of view, that the Cupid of the Hôtel de Rambouillet affected strict Platonism, nor was there indeed much danger to be anticipated to the honour of families from the frigid affectation of his conceited jargon. The *fashion* had only the effect of making the young female aspirant treat with contempt the good man whom she chanced to call husband, for his total ignorance of the regular procedure in love-matters. Such, at least, were the ostensible bounds within which these apish and fantastic tricks were practised; whether the limits were ever transgressed, is a question rather for the scandalous chronicle than the critic. To add singularity of manners to

abstruseness of language and sentiment, the lady who entertained these coteries received the company in bed, and the company arranged themselves around her in the alcove where it was placed. Then flowed that inimitable tide of affected conversation, in which one ambiguous, tortuous and metaphysical conceit gave place to another still more obscure,—where, by dint of what the circle termed delicacy of sentiment and felicity of expression, they became perfectly unintelligible; and language, instead of being put to its natural and legitimate purpose of asking and receiving information, was employed to give vent to all the nonsensical extravagances of a bizarre fancy, which resembled legitimate wit as little as a Will-of-the-Wisp is like the evening star. True wit, doubtless (but for the time distorted and abused), had some place in the coterie, since Sevigné, Menage, Deshouillères, L'Enclos, and other persons distinguished for talent, encouraged this absurd fashion; forgetting or neglecting the precept of a bard who himself seldom remembered it—that it is better wit should not be displayed at all, than that every expression should be tortured into a witticism.

There could not be more legitimate food for satire than a system of solemn pedantic foppery, which its proselytes, in the extremity of self-conceit, considered as the most refined

perfection of gallantry. While this ridiculous affectation was adopted by the learned and noble, and even by prelates as well as nobles, Molière, so lately the manager of a company of strolling players, was loading that piece, the discharge of which was to disperse this flock of jackdaws in borrowed feathers.

The title of his drama was taken from one of the rules of the society at the Hôtel de Rambouillet not yet alluded to. As the females were frozen towards their insipid gallants, they made amends by lavishing the extremity of tender friendship upon each other. *Ma chère, ma précieuse*, were their usual terms of endearment, and from thence the title of *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. In this celebrated piece, Molière introduced two females (daughter and niece of a worthy burgess called Gorgibus), who, having become infected with the false wit and gallantry of the *ruelles*, and having substituted, according to a fashion practised by the *élégantes* of the day, the sonorous names of *Aminte* and *Polixène* for their baptismal ones of Cathos and Madelon, with all the sentimental jargon which belonged to their new appellatives, have set themselves up as *précieuses* of the first class. They have of course, a suitable contempt for honest Gorgibus, whose distress, perplexity and resentment are extreme, and all occasioned by the perverse elegance of his woman-kind, who, in

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their attempts to emulate the follies and conceits of the incomparable Arthenice (a romantic epithet by which Madame de Rambouillet was distinguished, even in her funeral sermon), talk in a style which he cannot comprehend, and act in a manner that leads him to doubt their sanity of mind. The proposals of two gentlemen, approved by Gorgibus, who thought them fit matches for his damsels, have been rejected with such extremity of scorn by the two princesses, that the rejected suitors determine to revenge themselves, which they do by causing their two valets, impudent conceited coxcombs of course, to be introduced to Aminte and Polixène, as men of fashion and quality. The *Précieuses* mistake the extravagant and absurd foppery, the second-hand airs of finery, and the vulgar impudence of the Marquis de Mascarille and the Vicomte de Jodelet, for the extremity of wit and gallantry: while the discovery, and the shame and confusion with which the unfortunate sentimentalists are overwhelmed, form the diverting conclusion of this amusing drama.

The piece was acted for the first time 18th November, 1659, and received with unanimous applause. The public, like children admitted behind the scenes, saw, with wonder and mirth, the trumpery which they had admired as crowns, sceptres, and royal robes, when

beheld at a distance,—thus learning to estimate, at their real value, the affected airs of super-excellence and transcendental elegance assumed by the frequenters of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

On the other hand, the party who were consequently made the laughing-stock of the theatre, were much hurt and offended, nor was the injury at all the lighter, that some of them had sense enough to feel that the chastisement was deserved. They had no remedy, however, but to swallow their chagrin, and call themselves by their own names in future. Menage expressed his own recantation in the words of Clovis, when he became a convert to Christianity, and told his assembled Franks they must now burn the idols which they had hitherto adored. The affectation of the period, such as we have described it, received a blow no less effectual than that which Ben Jonson, by his satire called “*Cynthia’s Revels*,” inflicted on the kindred folly of Euphuism; or as the author of “*The Baviad and Mæviad*” dealt to similar affectations of our own day. But Molière made a body of formidable enemies amongst the powerful and the learned, whose false pretensions to wit and elegance he had so rudely exposed.

Two things were remarkable as attending the representation of this excellent satire; first, that an old man, starting up in the par-

terre, exclaimed, « Courage, Molière ; this is real comedy ! » and, secondly, that the author himself, perceiving, from the general applause, that he had touched the true vein of composition, declared his purpose henceforward to read his lessons from the human bosom, instead of studying the pages of Terence and Plautus.

Les Précieuses Ridicules has been imitated by Shadwell with considerable success in his comedy of *Bury-fair*. And here we may remark, that M. Taschereau is led, probably from the example of most English authors, to speak of this dramatist with more contempt than he deserved. Shadwell was unfortunate in being placed in rivalry with Dryden, and still more so in becoming the object of his satire. But he had a strong sense of humour, and occasionally great power in expressing it. He was the Ben Jonson of his day, however inferior to him in genius ; and as a painter of manners, his works ought not to be lost sight of by the English antiquary.

Molière next produced, in 1660, *Sganarelle, ou Le Cocu Imaginaire*. His biographer, like Master Ford, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, censures this second title as coarse and indelicate, unpleasing to the ear as the names of Amaimon, Lucifer, and Barbason. We trust that detestation of the vice has since Molière's time introduced among his countrymen such

laudable horror against the appellative of the principal sufferer. Since the days of the Italian novellieri, Boccacio, Bandello, and the rest, their tales of intrigue had been imitated in the Cent Nouvelles, the Tales of the Queen of Navarre, and other works of a similar kind. In all these collections, the seductive intrigues, which carry dishonour and desolation into the bosom of families, had been exposed by the novelists, and listened to by their hearers, the courtiers of a licentious age, as fitting subjects for jest and raillery, rather than crimes imperatively demanding censure. If Molière, on the present and future occasions, lent his admirable talents to the same depraved purpose of entertaining profligates by placing their guilt in a ludicrous point of view, Fortune reserved for him a severe retaliation, of which we shall speak hereafter.

After an unsuccessful effort at a serious piece (*Don Garcie de Navarre, ou Le Prince Jaloux*), Molière resumed his natural bent; and in *L'Ecole des Maris*, presented one of his best compositions, and at once obliterated all recollection of his failure.

It was acted at Paris with unanimous applause, and again represented at the magnificent entertainment given by the superintendent of finances, Fouquet, to Louis XIV and his splendid court. Fouquet, at once the most opulent and the most splendid man of

his time, had exhausted every species of incense which could be offered to a royal idol. The beautiful Bejart, whom Molière afterwards married, appeared as a Naiad, in a shell shaped like the chariot of a sea-goddess, and delivered an elegant compliment composed by Pelisson. Le Brun painted the decorations of the scene,—Le Nôtre laid out the surrounding architectural ornaments,—La Fontaine wrote verses,—Molière composed and performed parts which none but himself could have invented. All visible to the eye was mirth unbounded, wealth immeasurable, a mighty king receiving the homage of a devoted subject. But never was there so complete a resemblance of the banquet of Damocles. The sharp glaive, suspended by a single hair, was hanging above the head of the devoted entertainer. Accustomed, like the successful lover of Danaë, to make love in a shower of gold, the financier had found an unexpected resistance in Mademoiselle La Vallière, a beautiful young person, attached to the train of Madame, the king's sister-in-law. Provoked at his want of success, the superintendent watched so closely every motion of the lady, that he discovered he had the king for his rival. Fouquet, at this moment, was not without hopes of attaining the unbounded power possessed by the lately deceased prime minister, the Cardinal Mazarin. Yet though

he nourished this distinguished ambition, his views as a courtier and statesman could not make him suppress his resentment, and, with extreme imprudence, he let La Vallière know that he was acquainted with the secret of her attachment. Indignant at the freedom of the communication, La Vallière lost no time in informing her royal lover of the discovery. It was the period of the magnificent fête at Vaux, that the king's resentment and jealousy were roused to the highest pitch, by his seeing a portrait of Mademoiselle La Vallière in the cabinet of the ambitious financier. He would have had him arrested and sent to prison on the spot, had not the queen-mother deterred him by the simple yet expressive words—
 “What! in the middle of an entertainment which he gives to you?” The punishment was only delayed till it could be less scandalous. The disgrace of the superintendent followed close on his magnificent entertainment.

Besides *L'École des Maris*, Molière contributed to the celebrated entertainment at Vaux a dramatic representation, called *Les Fâcheux*, consisting of a series of detached scenes, which were only designed to be acted during the intervals of a ballet, to fill the stage while the dancers were changing their dresses and characters for a new exhibition. In these scenes, a lover, who has an assignation with his mistress, is represented as successively interrupt-

ed by various importunate persons, (in modern tongue *bored*,) who come to intrude on him their company and their follies. But out of such slender materials, what a lecture upon follies of character and manners has Molière contrived to read us!

Even the jealous fury which animated Louis did not prevent his entering into the humour of «*Les Fâcheux*,» and pointing out to Molière another folly, which might augment the list of the tormenting intruders. This existed in the person of Monsieur de Soyecourt, Grand Veneur or Great Huntsman to the King, wildly and exclusively attached to the pleasures of the chase. The royal hint was not neglected, but it became necessary, in order to acquire the terms of the chase necessary to be placed in the mouth of the new character, that Molière should apply to Monsieur de Soyecourt himself, who with unsuspecting good-nature, furnished the comedian with an ample vocabulary of the phrases destined to render himself ridiculous. The scene which Molière composed on this occasion exhibits a strong contrast betwixt French and English manners. Dorante is a courtier devoted to the chase, who insists upon telling Eraste a long story about a late hunting-match in which he was engaged; and which was broken off by a country gentleman, who, against all the rules of *venerie*, shot the stag dead with a pistol. In

England, such a country gentleman as Squire Western would have understood hunting better than all the nobles of the court of St James's.

M. Taschereau observes, that in one scene of this little unconnected string of scenes, which nevertheless has more wit and nature in it than most regular comedies, the poet has shown his philosophy as well as his power of comedy. It is where he recognizes the efforts of the King to put a stop to the Gothic and barbarous custom of duelling. « It is an example which ought to teach poets how to employ the influence they possess over the human heart.» We subscribe to the opinion, yet must add that it was also a high and exquisite touch of flattery, although very properly introduced in the only drama which Molière inscribed to Louis XIV.

L'École des Femmes was Molière's next work of importance. It is a comedy of the highest order. An old gentleman, who had been an intriguer in his youth, and knew (as he flattered himself,) all the wiles of womankind, endeavours to avoid what he considers as the usual fate of husbands, by marrying his ward, a beautiful girl, simple almost to silliness, but to whom nature has given as much of old mother Eve's talent for persuasion and imposition as enables her to baffle all the schemes of her aged admirer, and unite herself to a young gallant more suited to her age. The « Country

Wife» of Wycherly is an imitation of this piece, with the demerit on the part of the English author of having rendered licentious a plot which in Molière's hands is only gay.

Although this piece was well received and highly applauded, it was at the same time severely criticised by those who had swallowed without digesting the ridicule which the author had heaped on the Hotel de Rambouillet in the «*Précieuses Ridicules*,» and on the various conceits and follies of the court in «*Les Fâcheux*.» Such critics having shown themselves too wise to express the pain which they felt on their own account, now set up as guardians of the purity of the national morals, and of the national language. A *naïve* expression used by Agnès was represented as depraving the one; a low and somewhat vulgar phrase was insisted upon as calculated to ruin the other. This affected severity in morals and grammar did not impose on the public, who were quite aware of the motive of critics who endeavoured to ground such formidable charges on foundations so limited. The celebrated Boileau drew his pen in defence of his friend, in whose most burlesque expression there truly lurked a learned and useful moral: «Let the envious exclaim against thee,» he said, «because thy scenes are agreeable to all the vulgar; if thou wert less acquainted with the art of pleasing, thou wouldst be enabled

to please even thy censors.” Molière himself wrote a defence of « L'École des Femmes, » « in which, » says M. Taschereau, « he had the good fortune to escape the most dangerous fault of an author writing upon his own compositions, and to exhibit wit, where some people would only have shown vanity and self-conceit. »

The wrath of these paltry and prejudiced critics proceeded beyond all the bounds of literary censure. The Duc de la Feuillade, supposed to be the original of a ridiculous man of quality introduced by Molière in his *Critique de l'École des Femmes*, was guilty of an action equally unbecoming and brutal, considering that the aristocratic laws of the French society of the day left him at liberty to put a personal affront on the manager of a theatre, whatever his genius or respectability, without being exposed to render him a personal account. He met Molière in one of the galleries of the Tuilleries, and assuming the appearance of one who wished to embrace and salute him—then no uncommon compliment—he seized rudely upon the poet's head with both his hands, and rubbing his face violently against the buttons of his own dress, repeated again and again the words, *tarte à la crème—tarte à la crème—* being one of the phrases in « L'École des Femmes » on which the critics had fastened as unpolite and barbarous. Greatly to the ho-

nour of Louis XIV, he censured with severity the courtier who, under the pretence of zeal for the elegance and purity of the French language, had taken the unmanly opportunity to insult a man of genius within the precincts of his master's palace.

L'Impromptu de Versailles was another fugitive piece, in which Molière, under the eyes of the sovereign, repelled the invidious criticism with which he had been assailed. Boursault, a man of talent and genius, had joined the cry against Molière, under the belief that he had himself been aimed at in the character of Lysidas, the poet, in the interlude. But Boursault prudently retired from the combat.

La Princesse d'Élide, executed upon a signal of the royal sceptre, was composed in haste to garnish a splendid fête of Louis, at Versailles, on the 9th of October, 1664, under the title of « The Pleasures of the Enchanted Island. As the scene belongs to the gorgeous and romantic drama, it afforded little scope to Molière's comic powers, though he has thrown in what the old English stage would have called the humours of Moron, a court jester. There may have been, however, allusions which are now lost, but which had poignancy at the time, since the entertainment was received with great applause. This production is, like the interlude of « Les Fâcheux, » rather a series of detached scenes, connected by one single in-

terest, which they neither advance nor retard, than a comedy bearing a regular plot.

His next production, of the same year, was a one act comedy, entitled *Le Mariage Forcé*. Sganarelle, a humourist of fifty-three or four, having a mind to marry a fashionable young woman, but feeling some instinctive doubts and scruples, consults several of his friends upon this momentous question; and the inimitable wit of Molière sustains so bald and simple a plot without permitting the reader to feel a sensation that the piece is wiredrawn or devoid of interest. The ridicule falls in a great measure on the sophists of the Sorbonne, whose attachment to the categories of Aristotle rendered them so obstinately opposed to every species of philosophical inquiry which transcended the limited sphere of the Stagyrite. The Aristotelian philosophers of the Sorbonne are treated with as little mercy as those of the ancient schools by the satirist Lucian, to whose works Molière seems to have been no stranger. Receiving no satisfactory counsel, and not much pleased with the proceedings of his bride elect, Sganarelle at last determines to give up his engagement, but is cudgelled into compliance by the brother of his intended; and so ends an entertainment which in the hands of any other would have been meagre enough, but as treated by Molière is full of humour and gaiety.

The concluding incident was taken from an adventure of the celebrated Comte de Grammont, renowned for his wit and gallantry, which made much noise at the time. While residing at the court of Charles II, Grammont had paid his assiduous addresses to the beautiful Miss Hamilton, sister of his future historian, Count Anthony Hamilton. But as fickle as brilliant, the Comte de Grammont being permitted by Louis XIV to return to Paris, set off for Dover without taking leave of his mistress. Two brethren of the deserted Ariadne pursued and overtook the fugitive Theseus. «Have you not forgotten something in London, Comte?» was the question of the Hamiltons. «In faith, I have,» replied the Comte, (more prudent than Sganarelle, and not waiting till things came to extremities)—«to marry your sister.» And he returned and redeemed his pledge accordingly, with a better grace at least than most other persons would have manifested in similar circumstances.

In the evening of the same day which saw «Le Mariage Forcé,» came out, as a part of the royal fête, the first three acts, or rough sketch of the celebrated satire, entitled *Tartuffe*, one of the most powerful of Molière's compositions. It was applauded, but from the clamour excited against the poet and the performance, as an attack on Religion, instead of its

impious and insidious adversary Hypocrisy, the representation was for the time interdicted; a fortunate circumstance, perhaps, since, in consequence, the drama underwent a sedulous revision, given by Molière to few of his performances.

Le Festin de Pierre—the Feast of the Statue—well known to the modern stage under the name of Don Juan, was the next vehicle of Molière's satire. The story, borrowed from the Spanish, is well known. In giving the sentiments of the libertine Spaniard, the author of *Tartuffe* could not suppress his resentment against the party, by whose interest with the King that piece had been excluded from the stage, or at least its representation suspended. "The profession of a hypocrite," says Don Juan, "has marvellous advantages. The imposture is always respected, and although it may be detected, must never be condemned. Other human vices are exposed to censure, and may be attacked boldly. Hypocrisy alone enjoys a privilege which stops the mouth of the satirist, and enjoys the repose of sovereign impunity." This expression, with some other passages in the piece (the general tenor of which is certainly not very edifying), called down violent clamours upon the imprudent author; some critics went so far as to invoke the spiritual censure, and the doom of the civil magistrate on Molière, as the Atheist

of his own « *Festin de Pierre.* » He was, however, on this as on other occasions, supported by the decided favour of the king, who then allowed Molière's company to take the title of *Comédiens du Roi*, and bestowed on them a pension of seven thousand livres, thereby showing how little he was influenced by the clamours of the poet's enemies, though attacking his mind on a weak point.

In the month of September, 1665, the king having commanded such an entertainment to be prepared, the sketch or impromptu called *L'Amour Médecin*, was, in the course of five days composed, got up, as the players call it, and represented. In this sketch, slight as it was, Molière contrived to declare war against a new and influential body of enemies. This was the medical faculty, which he had slightly attacked in the « *Festin de Pierre.* » Every science has its weak points, and is rather benefited than injured by the satire which, putting pedantry and quackery out of fashion, opens the way to an enlightened pursuit of knowledge. The medical faculty at Paris, in the middle of the seventeenth century, was at a very low ebb. Almost every physician was attached to some particular form of treatment, which he exercised on his patients without distinction, and which probably killed in as many instances as it effected a cure. Their exterior, designed, doubtless, to inspire respect by its

peculiar garb and formal manner, was in itself matter of ridicule. They ambled on mules through the city of Paris, attired in an antique and grotesque dress, the jest of its laughter-loving people, and the dread of those who were unfortunate enough to be their patients. The consultations of these sages were conducted in a barbarous Latinity, or if they condescended to use the popular language, they disfigured it with an unnecessary profusion of technical terms, or rendered it unintelligible by a prodigal tissue of scholastic formalities of expression. M. Taschereau quotes the verses of a contemporary :

Affecter un air pédantesque,
Cracher du grec et du latin,
Longue perruque, habit grotesque,
De la fourrure et du satin :
Tout cela réuni fait presque
Ce qu'on appelle un médecin.

The rules taught to the faculty were calculated to cherish every ancient error and exclude every modern improvement, for they were sworn never to seek out discoveries in the science which they practised, or to depart from the aphorisms of Hippocrates. Daring empirics were found amongst them, who adventured upon the administration of chemical receipts, of which they could not even conjecture the effect, and there were individuals

believed capable, if gained by a sufficient bribe, of accelerating the death of the patients whom they came to cure. The medical science was, in short, enveloped in ignorance, and to encourage those who followed the profession in the attainment of real knowledge, it was necessary to expose the pedantry and insufficiency of these formal and empty pretenders to a science of which they knew nothing. To rescue the noble power of healing, which has in our days been followed by so many men of minds as vigorous and powerful as their hearts were benevolent, from the hands of ignorance and empiricism, was a task worthy the satire of Molière, who with Le Sage for his colleague, went far in accomplishing it.

The venerable dulness and pedantic ignorance of the faculty was incensed at the ridicule cast upon it in *L'Amour Médecin*, especially, as four of its most distinguished members were introduced under Greek names, invented by Boileau for his friend's use. The consultation held by these sages, which respects every thing save the case of the patient—the ceremonious difficulty with which they are at first brought to deliver their opinions—the vivacity and fury with which each finally defends his own, menacing the instant death of the patient, if any other treatment be observed, seemed all to the public highly comical, and led many reflecting men to think Lisette was

not far wrong, in contending that a patient should not be said to die of a fever or a consumption, but of four doctors and two apothecaries. The farce enlarged the sphere of Molière's enemies, but as the poet suffered none of the faculty to prescribe for him, their resentment was of the less consequence.

The *Misanthrope*, accounted by the French critics the most correct of Molière's compositions, was the next vehicle of his satire against the follies of the age. Except for the usual fault of his gratuitously adopted coarseness, it is admirably imitated in the "Plain Dealer," of Wycherley. Alceste is an upright and manly character, but rude, and impatient even of the ordinary civilities of life and the harmless hypocrisies of complaisance, by which the ugliness of human nature is in some degree disguised. He quarrels with his friend Philinte for receiving the bow of a man he despises; and with his mistress for enjoying a little harmless ridicule of her friend, when her back is turned. He tells a conceited poet, that he prefers the sense and simplicity of an old ballad to the false wit of a modern sonnet,—he proves his judgment to be just,—and receives a challenge from the poet in reward of his criticism. Such a character, placed in opposition to the false and fantastic affectations of the day, afforded a wide scope for the satire of Molière. The situation somewhat resem-

bles that of Eraste, in « Les Fâcheux.» But the latter personage is only interrupted by fools and impostors during a walk in the Tuilleries, where he expects to meet his mistress: the distress of Alceste lies deeper, — he is thwarted by pretenders and coxcombs in the paths of life itself, and his peculiar temper renders him impatient of being pressed and shouldered by them; so that, like an irritable man in a crowd, he resents those inconveniences to which men of equanimity submit, not as a matter of choice, indeed, but as a point of necessity. The greater correctness of this piece may be owing to the lapse of nine months, (an unusual term of repose for the muse of Molière,) betwixt the appearance of *L'Amour Médecin* and that of the « *Misanthrope*.» Yet this chef-d'œuvre was at first coldly received by the Parisian audience, and to render it more attractive, Molière was compelled to attach to its representation the lively farce of *Le Médecin malgré lui*. In a short time the merit of the « *Misanthrope*» became acknowledged by the public, and even many of those critics who had hitherto been hostile, united in its praise.

Yet scandal was not silent; for Molière was loudly censured, as having, in the person of Alceste, ridiculed the Duke de Montausier, a man of honour and virtue, but of blunt uncourteous manners. The duke, informed that

he had been brought on the stage by Molière, threatened vengeance; but being persuaded to see the play, he sought out the author instantly, embraced him repeatedly, and assured him, that if he had really thought of him when composing the «*Misanthrope*,» he regarded it as an honour which he could never forget.

The lively farce of «*Le Médecin malgré lui*,» was translated by Fielding, under the title of the «*Mock Doctor*.» The story is taken from an old fabliau, which in its turn has probably been derived from an eastern tale. In the original tale, the Mock Doctor having been cudgelled into a leech of deep skill, is commanded by the king of the country, on pain of perishing under the bastinado, to cure at once all the sick of the capital, whom the well-meaning sovereign has assembled for the purpose, in an immense hospital. The «*médecin malgré lui*» extricates himself with dexterity. He assembles his patients in a great hall, in one end of which is lighted a mighty fire.

«*My friends,*» says the physician, «*I can, it is true, cure all your complaints, but the principal ingredient in my panacea, is the ashes of a man who has been burned alive!* As this is indispensable to the composition of the medicine, I have no doubt that the patient amongst you who feels himself most deplorably indisposed, will willingly agree to be sacrificed as the victim, by means of whose death the rest

are to be cured. You, sir," addressing a gouty patient, "have much the appearance of being the greatest invalid present." "Who, I, sir?" replied Gout, "appearances are deceitful; I was never better in my life than at this moment." "If well in health what business have you among the sick? Get out with you! You," to a paralytic patient, "have, I presume, no objection to become the scape-goat." "Every objection p-p-possible," stuttered Palsy, and was turned out to hobble after Gout. The doctor gets rid of all his patients in the same manner, without any loss of reputation; for as they leave the hospital they are interrogated severally by the king, to whom, under apprehension of being sent back to be calcined, they all report themselves perfectly cured.

We cannot help thinking, that if Molière had been acquainted with this singular conclusion of the story, he would have, under some form or other, introduced it into his whimsical and entertaining little drama. The author himself treated the piece as a trifle, for which he is affectionately reproved by the author of the following verses :—

Molière, dit-on, ne l'appelle
 Qu'une petite bagatelle :
 Mais cette bagatelle est d'un esprit si fin,
 Que, s'il faut que je vous le die,
 L'estime qu'on en fait est une maladie,
 Qui fait que, dans Paris, tout court au *Médecin*.

But not even the praises paid to the « Misanthrope, » though a piece of a mood much higher than *Le Médecin malgré lui*, satisfied Molière. « *Vous verrez bien autre chose,* » said he to Boileau, when the latter congratulated him on the success of the chef-d'œuvre which we have just named. He anticipated the success of the most remarkable of his performances, the celebrated « Tartuffe, » in which he has unmasked and branded vice, as in his lighter pieces he has chastised folly. This piece had been acted before Louis, before his queen, and his mother, and at the palace of the great Prince of Condé; but the scruples infused into the king long induced him to hesitate ere he removed the interdict which prohibited its representation. Neither were these scruples yet removed. Permission was, indeed, given to represent the piece, but under the title of the « Impostor, » and calling the principal person, Panulphe, for it seems the name of Tartuffe was peculiarly offensive. The king, having left Paris for the army, the president of the parliament of Paris prohibited any further representation of the obnoxious piece, thus disguised, although licensed by his majesty. Louis did not resent this interference, and two compositions of Molière were interposed betwixt the date of the suspension which we have noticed, and the final permission to bring « Tartuffe » on the stage.

These were—*Mélicerte*, a species of heroic pastoral, in which Molière certainly did not excel,—and *Le Sicilien, ou L'Amour Peintre*, a few lively scenes linked together, so as to form a pleasing introduction to several of those dances in costume, or ballets, as they were called, in which Louis himself often assumed a character.

At length, in August, 1667, *Le Tartuffe*, so long suppressed, appeared on the stage, and in the depth and power of its composition left all authors of comedy far behind. The art with which the «Impostor» is made to develop his real character, without any of the usual soliloquies or addresses to a confidant, for the benefit of the audience, has been always admired as inimitable. The heart of a man who had least desired, and could worst bear close investigation, is discovered and ascertained in all its bearings, gradually, yet certainly, as navigators trace the lines and bearings of an unknown coast. The persons amongst whom this illustrious hypocrite performs the principal character are traced with equal distinctness. The silly old mother, obstinate from age as well as bigotry; the modest and sensible Cléante; his brother-in-law, Orgon, prepared to be a dupe by prepossession and self-opinion; Damis, impetuous and unreflecting; Mariane, gentle and patient, with the hasty and petulant sallies of Dorine, who ridicules

the family she serves with affection; are all faithfully drawn, and contribute their own share on the effect of the piece, while they assist in bringing on the catastrophe. In this catastrophe, however, there is something rather inartificial. It is brought about too much by a *tour de force*, too entirely by the 'de par le roi,' to deserve the praise bestowed on the rest of the piece. It resembles, in short, too nearly the receipt for making the "Beggars' Opera" end happily, by sending some one to call out a reprieve. But as it manifested, at the same time, the power of the prince, and afforded opportunity for panegyric on his acuteness in detecting and punishing fraud, Molière, it is certain, might have his own good reasons for unwinding and disentangling the plot by means of an *exempt* or king's messenger.

Besides the honourable tribute paid to the sovereign in the close of the "Tartuffe," a diverting part of the colloquy in the first act was borrowed from an expression of Louis himself. It chanced that upon the eve of a fast, the king being hungry, sat down to a repast, and invited Perefice, Bishop of Rhodéz, to bear him company. The prelate declined with affectation, and with an obstinacy of which the king desired to know the motive. After the bishop had left the apartment, some one gave Louis a particular account of his

reverence's dinner; which consisted of so many dishes, and was so well done justice to, that his majesty could have no apprehension of his suffering from famine. At the name of each new dish, the king exclaimed, in a varied inflection of voice, "*Oh, le pauvre homme!*" the very expression which Orgon uses to express his sympathy with Tartuffe. This anecdote associated the prince, in a certain degree, with the success of the play, and may have inclined him at last to the favourable estimate which he formed of "*Tartuffe.*"

But our readers may request, after all, to know our sentiments on the objection of profanity, which, though unquestionably it was advanced against Molière by men actuated by personal and invidious motives, was also supported by the authority of Bossuet and Bourdaloue.

"As true and false doctrine," says the latter preacher, "have I know not how many actions in common betwixt them, and the exterior of the one can hardly be discriminated from the other, it is not only an easy but almost a necessary consequence, that the raillery which attacks one should affect the other, and that the features imputed to the one should disfigure the other. Such has been the actual consequence when profane wits have undertaken to censure hypocrisy, and thereby caused unjust suspicions to be entertained of real

piety, by malignant interpretations put upon that which is false. This is what they have attempted in exposing to the laughter of a public theatre, an imaginary hypocrite, and turning, in his person, the most holy things into ridicule, representing him as blaming the scandals of the world in an extravagant manner, and as affecting a scrupulous conscience on indifferent matters, while he scrupled not, secretly, to meditate the most atrocious crimes, assuming a rueful penitentiary visage, which only served to cover the most sensual indulgences, and affixing to him, as their caprice suggests, an exterior of austere piety, as a cover for the basest and most mercenary purposes."

Such is the charge brought by a wise, eloquent, and pious man, in his sermon on the seventh Sunday after Easter. But wisdom, eloquence, and piety, are all liable to error, and differing essentially from Bourdaloue in the opinion which he has expressed, we have deemed it only justice to state the case in his own forcible words, before we venture to express our humble sentiments.

We may remark, in the first place, that were the preacher's arguments to be carried to extremity, it would follow as a result, that no vice could be blamed, lest a censure should arise on its corresponding virtue. In that mode of reasoning a satire upon avarice would be objectionable as a censure of economy, and

the blame applicable to profusion would be proscribed as discrediting generosity. For every virtue, brilliant in itself, is followed by a vice, attached to it as shadow is to substance, bearing in its milder aspect the appearance of the virtue carried to excess, and seeming as inseparable from it as Bourdaloue declares hypocrisy to be from true religion. But are we, therefore, to refrain from censuring the vicious excess, because we render due honour to the virtue practised in its just mean? We do not, however, insist on this general argument, because we willingly concede that it is less lawful and even more dangerous to treat lightly the language and observances of religion, than those which only regard moral conduct and social life.

We agree, therefore, with Father Bourdaloue, that the rash application of satire or ridicule, as the single test of truth, from which there lies no appeal, may lead to the worst consequences where religion is in question. To hold up to ridicule the scruples of a conscience really tender and fearful of offence, even if these scruples are stretched, in our estimation, to the verge of absurdity, is, we think, likely to be attended with all the scandal to true religion which the learned preacher apprehends. But, grant the existence of such criminals as Tartuffe, (and, alas! who dare deny that there have existed, and perhaps

are yet to be found such snakes in the bosom of Christian society), we search in vain in Scripture, or in the practice of the best friends of religion in all ages, for any warrant to spare them. If we look to the Holy Scripture, our best and safest guide, no crime is denounced more frequently, or described as more odious to the Author of our Religion, than that of the hypocrites who made a gain of godliness, and possessed themselves by means of long prayers of the goods of orphans. We find them repeatedly mentioned, and with a deepness of denunciation on their practices which seems to authorize their being held up to detestation by every means which can be taken to expose moral criminals. If the state of society be such, that characters of a cast so dangerous,

Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
Are touched and shamed by ridicule alone,

where shall we find the means of assailing them unless by the influence of satire?

If ridicule as well as reason had not been employed, and that with an unsparing hand, the whole Christian world would at this day have groaned under the oppressions and usurpations of the Church of Rome; or if Louis XIV had fully apprehended the satire of Molière, he might have saved that great blot on his name, the persecution of his Protestant sub-

jects, and the breach of public faith, in revoking the Edict of Nantes. Ridicule is, we allow, a hazardous weapon, to be used with caution; yet when employed with a good faith and honest purpose, it is the most formidable and effectual which can be directed against a crime equally odious in the sight of God and dangerous to human society. It is, we think, in the allegorical romance of Spenser, that a champion is introduced bending with awe and reluctance his lance against an opponent covered by the red cross shield. But when that sign is found to disguise an impostor and a felon, the true knight does not permit him for an instant to enjoy its protection. There is much less danger of religion being discredited by the discovery and exposure of devoted and self-seeking hypocrisy, than in permitting that vice to lurk like a concealed and consuming canker in the bosom of society, undetected and uncauterized. To assert that the practice of exterior observances is to preserve the hypocrite from exposure, because it may occasion a scrupulous inquisition into the conduct of the really conscientious, is saying, that we ought to receive a false coinage because it is an imitation of that which is true, or that the profession of religion ought to serve, like the churches in Popish countries, as an asylum for all that is vicious and criminal in society.

If, indeed, hypocrisy is to be sacred from

ridicule, it is not easy to see to what tribunal that odious vice is to be delivered for trial and censure. The scandal which Père Bourdaloue apprehends to real religion must be incurred by every species of inquisition that shall be made into the reality of religious pretexts; and yet without some such inquisition the tares cannot be severed from the wheat—the forged and worthless imitation distinguished from the precious and inimitable reality. The same evil would arise from punishing the crimes of Tartuffe in a court of justice as from exposing them upon the stage. But, surely, although such exposure may lead men to try more severely the pretensions of such as make peculiar professions of devotion, the separation of the pure gold from the dross must in the end lead to the first being held in higher estimation, and to the worthlessness of the second being exposed to deserved contempt.

We have hitherto considered the case of an incorrigible hypocrite, as of one who is punished, not with a view to his correction, but to his detection and the prevention of the mischief he may work in society. But this is only half of the real question. Spiritual pride, a sin, and a great one, often creeps insensibly into bosoms which are most formed to nourish devotional sentiments. The self-supposed elect of the Deity is too apt (so easily are our best inclinations turned to corruption and per-

version), to look down on the race of worldly men, and, in his delusion, to return thanks, with the Pharisee, that he is not like the contrite Publican. A portrait like that of Tartuffe may arrest such a man in his course, by showing him that the fairest professions and the strictest observances may be consistent with the foulest purposes; and that though we may strictly discharge our religious duties, we are not to arrogate to ourselves merits towards heaven, or entertain hopes which can only be grounded on merits far different from our own. Such a picture may also call to reflection the bold and ambitious impostor, who, from the desire of acquiring influence over his fellow-men, is tempted to use his religious character as the means of effecting his purpose. As the career of such a character often begins and proceeds to a certain length in the sincere feeling of devotion, it may be prevented from ending in a course of hypocrisy equally dangerous to the individual himself and to society, by the public exposure of the contents of one of those sepulchres, whitened on the outside, which are a charnel-house within.

We do not desire to travel out of the record, or to lay down any general rule in what cases satire ought, or ought not, to be employed in reprehension of hypocrisy. Undoubtedly there may be instances to which Bourdaloue's

arguments are applicable, and where it may be better that a criminal person should be punished, or expelled from society, without public exposure. But the case of Tartuffe is that of a vilely wicked man, rendering the profession of religion hateful, by abusing it for the worst purposes; and if such characters occurred, as there is little reason to doubt, in the time and court of Louis XIV., we can see no reason against their being gibbeted in effigy. The poet himself is at pains to show that he draws the true line of distinction betwixt the hypocrite and the truly religious man. When the duped Orgon, astonished at the discovery of Tartuffe's villany, expresses himself doubtful of the existence of real worth, Cléante replies to him with his usual sense and moderation.

Hé bien! ne voilà pas de vos emportemens!
Vous ne gardez en rien les doux tempéramens.
Dans la droite raison jamais n'entre la vôtre;
Et toujours d'un excès vous vous jetez dans l'autre.
Vous voyez votre erreur, et vous avez connu
Que par un zèle feint vous étiez prévenu:
Mais pour vous corriger quelle raison demande
Que vous alliez passer dans une erreur plus grande,
Et qu'avecque le cœur d'un perfide vaurien
Vous confondiez les cœurs de tous les gens de bien?
Quoi! parce qu'un fripon vous dupe avec audace
Sous le pompeux éclat d'un austère grimace,
Vous voulez que partout on soit fait comme lui,
Et qu'aucun vrai dévot ne se trouve aujourd'hui?

Laissez aux libertins ces sottes conséquences :
Démêlez la vertu d'avec ses apparences,
Ne hasardez jamais votre estime trop tôt,
Et soyez pour cela dans le milieu qu'il faut.
Gardez-vous, s'il se peut, d'honorer l'imposture :
Mais au vrai zèle aussi n'allez pas faire injure ;
Et s'il vous faut tomber dans une extrémité,
Pêchez plutôt encor de cet autre côté.—*Act. V, Scène I.*

After the victorious reception of «Tartuffe,» and before the clamour and controversy to which it gave occasion were nearly ended, Molière presented the stage with the wild and lively comedy of *Amphitryon*. We must own that a piece founded on such a subject does not appear to us to have been wisely calculated to efface the reproaches cast upon the author of «Tartuffe,» as a corrupter of national morals, and that a satire on some decided vice, fashionable at the time, would have much better supported his defence against the devotees, whether true or false, than a drama, which, though drawing its origin from pagan times, must always remain censurable. But the subject had been admitted on every stage in Europe, although, according to Riccoboni, it should not be received on any theatre where morals are respected.

The truth may, perhaps, be, that Molière, weary for the moment of contention, was willing to compose a play, entertaining from its subject, and affording room for jests, which

neither men of fashion, doctors, princesses, nor bigots, could regard as personal. He might remember what the great Condé said to Louis XIV, when the king asked him how the auditors, so sensitive about Tartuffe, listened, without indignation, to the profanities and indecencies of a coarse farce called *Scaramouche Hermite*. «Because,» replied Condé, «it only violates decency and religion, without attacking priests and bigots.» Be that as it may, *Amphytrion* was handled with infinite humour, and with as much decency as the story permitted, and censure was drowned in laughter.

Molière was not so fortunate in his next piece, though equally well received, and no less deserving of it. *George Dandin*, a wealthy citizen, who has had the imprudence to marry a sprig of quality, daughter of an old jackass of nobility called Monsieur De Sotenville, and his no less noble spouse Madame de la Prudoterie, is exposed at once to the coquetry of a light-headed wife, who despises his birth and understanding, and to the rigorous sway of her parents; who, called upon to interfere with their authority, place their daughter in the right and the unhappy roturier, their son-in-law, in the wrong, on every appeal which is made to them. Angelica is represented as thoughtless, not criminal, and appearances, at least, are thus saved. Nevertheless, there was

more than one Sotenville about court, and Dandin in the city, who felt the ridicule sting home, and complained, as Rousseau did afterwards, that, in seeking food for his satiric vein, Molière was not unwilling to pervert the order of society, and to sow dissension in the bosom of families. The public again laughed at the sufferers, and exculpated the poet, or became, by their applause, his accomplices in the pretended crime.

George Dandin was acted 18th July, 1668. On the 3d September, in the same year, the moral comedy of *L'Avare* was presented to the public by the fertile muse of our author. The general conception of the piece, as well as many of the individual scenes, are taken from Plautus, but adapted to French society, with a degree of felicity belonging to Molière alone. The poor (and most people think themselves so with relation to their expenses), are usually somewhat envious of the rich, and very willing to enjoy a laugh at their cost; especially if the latter stand convicted of avarice, or saving money, not for the sake of what it can procure, but for the purpose of amassing and hoarding it. No vice meets with less sympathy than avarice, for the good reason that all think that they could employ, to advantage, what the miser seems to possess only after the manner of Æsop's dog in the manger, withholding it from others, yet denying to himself the enjoy-

ments which it might command. The vice also, when it gains possession of an individual, shows so mean, inconsequential, and unreasonable, that we cannot wonder at its being a favourite subject for satirical poetry. The highest compliment paid to the truth of Molière's picture was by an actual miser, who was so much delighted with the representation, that he did not grudge the money which his admission had cost, because the piece, as he argued, contained such excellent lessons of economy. It is remarkable that M. Taschereau, while he mentions this play as an immortal page in the history of French manners, seems to think that it records a character which has now ceased to exist in Paris. Elwes has been long in his grave; but we believe that Harpagnons could yet be found on this side of the Channel. «L'Avare» was less favourably received than usual; the reason assigned is its being written in prose;—but posterity did Molière ample justice:—it was transferred to the British stage, of which it still retains possession, by the celebrated Fielding.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, acted in autumn, 1669, «is,» says Voltaire, «a farce; but in all Molière's farces are found scenes worthy of the highest class of comedy.» It is mixed, undoubtedly, with much buffoonery of a coarse and low kind; but this was necessary to attract large popular audiences. «I am the manager

of a theatre as well as an author," said Molière, "I must make some money, as well as correct and instruct; and I am necessarily sometimes induced to consult the profit and interest of my company, at the expense of my own fame as an author." To a confession so frank and manly no critic can venture to reply; the only wonder is, how little, comparatively speaking, there is of meanness or sacrifice to public taste, how much of real wit and comedy, in compositions which claim no higher name than farces.

The province of Limoges has been esteemed the Thebes of France, and its natives, as if born in a grosser air, are popularly supposed peculiarly dull, and liable to imposition. A Limosin gentleman named Monsieur De Pourceaugnac (almost all the names of that country terminate in *ac*), comes to Paris to marry Julie, the heroine; the authority of her father having destined her hand to him. But Julie has a lover, and this lover has the art to play off so many tricks and mystifications upon the provincial suitor, that he finally relinquishes his suit in despair. The piece being a *comédie-ballet*, the comic scenes are intermingled with pageants resembling the ancient masque, which were ingeniously contrived so as to blend with the interest of the piece. What is delivered as real comic dialogue is so excellent, that Diderot has well said, the critic

would be much mistaken who should think there were men more capable of writing «Monsieur de Pourceaugnac» than of composing the «Misanthrope.» This piece was brought on the English stage under the title of the «Brave Irishman.» The objects of the tricks and jests of the scene is, in that little piece, an honest Hibernian, whom the author has gifted with a perfect ignorance of the town, and a competent quantity of confusion of ideas, but, at the same time, with so much of the native gallantry of his country, that, instead of encountering the fate of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, he breaks through all the toils which have been spread for him, and carries off the lady in spite of his intriguing rival.

Omitting *Les Amans Magnifiques*, called by Molière a minor comedy, but which may be rather considered as a piece of framework for the introduction of scenic pageantry, and which is only distinguished by some satirical shafts, directed against the now obsolete folly of judicial astrology, we hasten to notice a master-piece of Molière's art in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. This piece was written to please the court and gentry, at the expense of the *nouveaux riches*, who, rendered wealthy by the sudden acquisition of immense fortune, become desirous to emulate such as have been educated in the front ranks of society, in those accomplishments, whether mental or

personal, which cannot be gracefully acquired after the early part of life is past. A grave, elderly gentleman learning to dance is proverbially ridiculous; but the same absurdity attaches to every one, who, suddenly elevated from his own sphere, becomes desirous of imitating, in the most minute particulars, those who are denizens of that to which he is raised. It is scarcely necessary to notice, that the ridicule directed against such characters as Monsieur Jourdain properly applies, not to their having made their fortunes, if by honest means, but to their being ambitious to distinguish themselves by qualities inconsistent with their age, habits of thinking, and previous manners. Jonson, before the time of Molière, had described, in the character of Sogliardo, a character something like Monsieur Jourdain, to whom the Herald's College had assumed for crest a headless boar. «And rampant too—troth I commend the herald's wit,” observes one of the personages. «He has decyphered him with a swine without a head, without brain, wit, or anything, indeed, ramping to gentility.” But the comic power of Molière has dwelt upon and illustrated the character, which Jonson only indicated by a few rough outlines; and there are few scenes, even in this admirable author's performances, more laughable than those of Jourdain's scenes with his various teachers, illustrated by the

raillery of Nicole, who sees and exposes so naturally the folly of her master.

The subjects of raillery most generally piquant to the high-born and courtly, are those directed against such intruders as Monsieur Jourdain, whom wealth emboldens to thrust upon them an awkward pretension to equality. Yet the court of France did not receive *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* in a favourable manner, when first presented at Chambord, on 14th October, 1670. Louis XIV, contrary to his wont, sate silent during the entertainment, and did not, as had been his custom hitherto, address a single word of encouragement to the author. *Regis ad exemplar*, the lords of the court looked cold on Molière, and the tongues of all his enemies were unchained. Some called shame upon him, for having represented Dorante, a man of quality, united in a scheme for duping Monsieur Jourdain, and partaking his spoils. Others, with more judgement, exclaimed against the extravagant interlude, in which the *bourgeois gentilhomme* is persuaded that the Grand Seigneur has made him a Mamamouchi, a knight of an imaginary order, and goes through the ceremony of a mock installation. Those very critics who asked how Molière had hoped to pass such gibberish upon them as was sung on this occasion, had listened with tranquillity, nay, with affected delight, to entertainments of the

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same kind, in which Louis himself had appeared as a performer. The friends of Molière made no very judicious defence. They endeavoured to represent the plot of the interlude as probable, and quoted the instance of the Abbé St Martin, who had been duped into a belief that he had received honours from the King of Siam. But Molière's apology rested on the very nature of the comédie-ballet, which admits of every species of incident, provided it produces good music and merry dances.

Several days elapsed between the first and second representation; during which Molière sustained all the anxiety of a discountenanced author. But after the piece had been acted for the second time, Louis at once did justice to the poet, and to his own judgment. The piece, he said, was excellent, and he had only suspended his opinion till he should be assured that he was speaking on mature reflection, and not under the seductive impression of excellent acting.

Of course the tone of the courtiers changed; the chorus of « Ha la ba, Ba la chou, » became wit and sense, and Dorante was only a man of quality who inflicted condign punishment on an insolent roturier, and abated his fever of conceit by assisting to drain his pocket. A certain duke, in particular, who had been loud in declaring against the dancing Turks and their unintelligible mummary, now exclaimed

in well painted rapture, « Molière is inimitable. He has reached a point of perfection to which none of the ancients ever attained. »

Les Fourberies de Scapin, an imitation of the Phormio of Terence, was Molière's next performance. It was written not for the amusement of the court, but for the diversion of the city of Paris, and possesses no other interest than what can be produced by whimsical interest, the tricks of an ingenious valet,

From top to toe, the Geta now in vogue,
upon an ill-tempered and avaricious father, in behalf of a giddy and extravagant son. There is no severe strain of morality in such a plot, but it is absurd to suppose that either servants will become dishonest, or sons disobedient, because they see Scapin and Leandre cheat old Argante. It would be as reasonable to suppose that a peasant would go home and beat his wife, because Punch in the puppet-show cudgels Joan. This comedy is one of adventure and intrigue, with little pretension to delineation of character. But Molière's exquisite skill in dialogue could not be suppressed or concealed. We doubt if, with his utmost efforts, he could have been absolutely dull, without the assistance of a pastoral subject and heroic measure. The phrase *Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?* will live as long as the French language.

Psiché may be omitted as a subject totally unfitted for Molière's genius; we are even tempted to say it could not be the work of the author of the «*Misanthrope*,» with its brilliant associates in fame—*Non omnia*—the highest genius has its natural bounds. *La comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, which next appears, turns entirely upon the oddities, absurdities and affectations of the provincial noblesse, who had at that time manners and habits of thinking extremely ridiculous in the eyes of the more polished society of the court. Molière must have been completely acquainted with these ludicrous points in the character of this class of society, as he had resided in so many different parts of France at the head of his wandering troop. Accordingly he has presented us with the rural Dowager, who is deeply incensed that a man of quality at court, whose family is not, perhaps, above two hundred years old, should dare to compare his gentility with that of her deceased husband, who had lived all his life in the country, kept a pack of hounds, and signed himself *Count*, in every bill, bond, or acquittance. The clownishness of the poor lady's servants is humourously contrasted with her vain attempts to make them keep up the appearances she thinks suitable to her rank. It is, perhaps, the piece of Molière's in which foreigners feel the comic point least forcibly; but it was followed by

one, the interest of which is vivid and unimpaired by the course of time.

This is *Les Femmes Savantes*, acted on 11th March, 1672; it was directed against a new female foible which had sprung up in the world of fashion, after the explosion of that of the Hotel de Rambouillet. Always ambitious of exclusive distinction, as they dared no longer render themselves conspicuous by the jargon of romance, they adopted the honours of science, and aspired to the dignity of learned ladies. Molière, «the Contemplator» as his friends called him, did not suffer this new species of pedantry to elude his vigilance. In fact it was of the same *genus*, though of a different species from that which he had formerly assailed successfully; for modish affectation possesses as many heads as the fabled hydra, of which

One still bourgeons where another falls :

and the satirist, on his part, deserved the praise due to a moral Hercules.

Out of a fashion or humour, which to an ordinary man would have but afforded a few scenes, Molière has found sufficient interest to fill up five acts of one of his best regular comedies. The Abbé Cotin—a personage who, affecting to unite in himself the rather inconsistent characters of a writer of poems of gallantry and a powerful and excellent preacher,

had obtained in the satires of Boileau a painful immortality—was also distinguished in « Les Femmes Savantes » as one of the leading beaux-esprit of the day, a poet *à la mode*, who, with equal truth and modesty, had the assurance to claim for himself the title of the Father of French Epigram. His dramatic name was originally Tricotin, which, as too plainly pointing out the individual, was softened into Trissotin. The following are the colours with which Molière has painted the unfortunate academician, for such Cotin had the honour to be.

Monsieur Trissotin

M'inspire au fond de l'âme un dominant chagrin.
 Je ne puis consentir, pour gagner ses suffrages,
 A me déshonorer en prisant ses ouvrages;
 C'est par eux qu'à mes yeux il a d'abord paru,
 Et je le connoissois avant que l'avoir vu.
 Je vis, dans le fatras des écrits qu'il nous donne,
 Ce qu'étale en tous lieux sa pédante personne,
 La constante hauteur de sa présomption,
 Cette intrépidité de bonne opinion,
 Cet indolent état de confiance extrême,
 Qui le rend en tout temps si content de soi-même,
 Qui fait qu'à son mérite incessamment il rit,
 Qu'il se sait si bon gré de tout ce qu'il écrit,
 Et qu'il ne voudroit pas changer sa renommée
 Contre tous les honneurs d'un général d'armée.

The coxcombry of Trissotin is most pleasantly contrasted with the severe, grave, and more formal folly and presumption of Vadius,

a pedant of heavier pretensions, founded upon his scholarship. The effect produced by the introduction of this brace of pretenders to the heroines, upon whom their supposed merits produce the same effect as the fashionable brilliancy of Mascarille and Jodelet in «*Les Précieuses Ridicules*», is extremely comical; nor is the behaviour of the two originals to each other less so, since, after dispensing the necessary degree of mutual flattery, a mistake of the pedant in criticising a madrigal of which Trissotin was the author, sets them together by the ears, and produces a scene of quarrelling as ridiculous as that of mutual flattery which preceded it.

The character of the learned ladies, who exclaim in rapture at sight of a man who understands Greek, dismiss their female domestic because she does not understand the delicacies of French grammar, and well-nigh cashier a lackey, not for dropping a chair, but because he does not know the consequence of any derangement from the centre of gravity, is well contrasted with the foible of the Father of the Family, a man not devoid of good sense, and extremely fond of vindicating his title to be obeyed, so long as his wife is absent, but submitting on all occasions when he is called upon to maintain his rights by courageous perseverance against the will of his helpmate. This play has been always considered one of

Molière's most powerful, as it is one of his most regular comedies.

The last of this great author's labours was at once directed against the faculty of medicine, and aimed at its most vulnerable point—namely, the influence used by some unworthy members of the profession to avail themselves of the nervous fears and unfounded apprehensions of hypochondriac patients. Instead of treating imaginary maladies as a mental disease, requiring moral medicine, there have been found in all times medical men, capable of listening to the rehearsal of these brain-sick whims as if they were real complaints, prescribing for them as such, and receiving the wages of imposition, instead of the honourable reward of science. On the other hand it must be admitted that the faculty has always possessed members of a spirit to condemn and regret such despicable practices. There cannot be juster objects of satire than such empirics, nor is there a foible more deserving of ridicule than the selfish timidity of the hypochondriac, who, ungrateful for the store of good health with which nature has endowed him, assumes the habitual precautions of an infirm patient.

Molière has added much to the humour of the piece by assigning to the *Malade Imaginaire* a strain of frugality along with his love of medicine, which leads him to take every mode that may diminish the expense of his supposed

indisposition. The expenses of a sick-bed are often talked of, but it is only the imaginary valetudinarian who thinks of carrying economy into that department; the real patient has other things to think of. Argan therefore is discovered taxing his apothecary's bill, at once delighting his ear with the flowery language of the Pharmacopœia, and gratifying his frugal disposition by clipping off some items and reducing others, and arriving at the double conclusion, first, that if his apothecary does not become more reasonable, he cannot afford to be a sick man any longer; and secondly, that as he has swallowed fewer drugs by one-third this month than he had done the last, it was no wonder that he was not so well. The inference « *Je le dirai à Monsieur Purgon, afin qu'il mette ordre à cela,* » is irresistibly comic.

It is scarcely an overstrained circumstance that an original, at once so fond of medicine and so chary of his money, should think of marrying his daughter to a young cub of a medical student, who is to be dubbed doctor in a few days. He is directed to this choice, both by the honour in which he holds the faculty, and the desire to possess the necessary medical advice within his own family which he is obliged to purchase at so dear a rate. A second wife, the stepmother of the destined bride, soothes her husband in this as well as his other humours. The match is opposed, and finally

with success, by the inclinations of Angélique, the daughter, and the intrigues of her lover, Cléante, seconded by Toinette, a *fille de chambre* of the same brisk lively humour which the author loved to draw. Thomas Diafoirus, the young candidate for the privilege of killing or curing, is an admirable portrait of its particular class. Pedantry is never more ridiculous than when associated with youth, upon which it sits so awkwardly.

There is a stage anecdote about the representation of the characters, worth the remark of more than one manager. An actress of his troop, of considerable pretensions, had married an inferior comedian named Beauveau, who had been at one time a candle-snuffer in the theatre. The parts of Toinette and Thomas Diafoirus were entrusted to this couple. Molière made so many critical objections to the lady's performance that she lost all patience. "You say all this to me," said she, "and not a word to my husband." "Heaven forbid I should attempt to instruct him," said Molière, "nature has given Monsieur Beauveau an instinctive comprehension of the part, which I should spoil in attempting to mend it."

Argan is at last persuaded, that the surest and cheapest way of securing himself against the variety of maladies by which he is beset, will be to become a doctor in his own proper person. He modestly represents his want of

preliminary study, and of the necessary knowledge even of the Latin language; but he is assured that by merely putting on the robe and cap of a physician, he will find himself endowed with all the knowledge necessary for exercising the profession. "What," says the patient, "will merely putting on the habit enable me to speak scholarly upon diseases?" "Assuredly," reply his advisers, "under such a garb gibberish becomes learning, and folly wisdom." This leads to the interlude which concludes the piece, being the mock ceremonial of receiving a physician into the Esculapian college, couched in macaronic Latinity, which was afterwards introduced by Foote in the farce where Dr Last makes a figure so distinguished. Another of these interludes we may barely mention as containing one of those flashes of humour of which Molière was so lavish, that they are to be found in his most trifling productions. Such certainly is a dance in which Polichinelle (Punch namely,) is pursued in the dark by the officers of justice (archers), and puts them to flight by making a sound resembling the report of a pistol. But though this is even childishly farcical, what can be more truly comic than the exclamation of the *archers* when they rally on the unfortunate jester:—

Faquin, maraud, pendard, impudent, téméraire,
 Insolent, effronté, coquin, filou, voleur,
Vous osez nous faire peur!

As the «Malade Imaginaire» was the last character in which Molière appeared, it is here necessary to say a few words upon his capacity as an actor. He bore, according to one contemporary, and with justice, the first rank among the performers of his line. He was a comedian from top to toe. He seemed to possess more voices than one, besides which every limb had its expression;—a step in advance or retreat, a wink, a smile, a nod, expressed more in his action, than the greatest talker could explain in words in the course of an hour. He was, says another contemporary, neither corpulent nor otherwise, rather above the middle size, with a noble carriage and well-formed limbs; he walked with dignity, had a very serious aspect, the nose and mouth rather large, with full lips, a dark complexion, the eyebrows black and strongly marked, and a command of countenance which rendered his physiognomy formed to express comedy. A less friendly pen (that of the author of *L'Impromptu de l'Hotel de Condé*) has caricatured Molière as coming on the stage with his head thrown habitually back, his nose turned up into the air, his hands on his sides with an affectation of negligence, and (what would seem in England a gross affectation, but which was tolerated in Paris as an expression of the *superbia quæsitæ meritis*,) his peruke always environed by a crown of laurels. But the only

real defect in his performance arose from a habitual *hoquet*, or slight hiccup, which he had acquired by attempting to render himself master of an extreme volubility of enunciation, but which his exquisite art contrived on almost all occasions successfully to disguise.

Thus externally fitted for his art, there can be no doubt that he, who possessed so much comedy in his conceptions of character, must have had equal judgment and taste in the theatrical expression, and that only the poet himself could fully convey what he alone could have composed. He performed the principal character in almost all his own pieces, and adhered to the stage even when many motives concurred to authorize his retirement.

We do not reckon it any great temptation to Molière, that the Academy should have opened its arms to receive him, under condition that he would abandon the profession of an actor; but the reason which he assigned for declining to purchase the honour at the rate proposed, is worthy of being mentioned. «What can induce you to hesitate?» said Boileau, charged by the Academicians with the negociation. «A point of honour,” replied Molière. «Now,” answered his friend, «what honour can lie in blacking your face with mustachios, and assuming the burlesque disguise of a buffoon, in order to be cudgelled on a public stage?” «The point of honour,” an-

swered Molière, «consists in my not deserting more than a hundred persons, whom my personal exertions are necessary to support.» The Academy afterwards did honour to themselves and justice to Molière by placing his bust in their hall, with this tasteful and repentant inscription—

«Nothing is wanting to the glory of Molière; Molière was wanting to ours!»

That Molière alleged no false excuse for continuing on the stage, was evident, when, in the latter years of his life, his decaying health prompted him strongly to resign. He had been at all times of a delicate constitution, and liable to pulmonary affections, which were rather palliated than cured by submission, during long intervals, to a milk diet, and by frequenting the country, for which purpose he had a villa at Auteuil, near Paris. The malady grew more alarming from time to time, and the exertions of voice and person required by his profession tended to increase its severity. On the 17th of February, 1673, he became worse than usual; Baron, an actor of the highest rank and of his own training, joined with the rest of the company in remonstrating against their patron going on in the character of Argan. Molière answered them in the same spirit which dictated his reply to Boileau: «There are fifty people,» he said, «who must want their daily bread, if the spectacle is put

off. I should reproach myself with their distress, if I suffered them to sustain such a loss, having the power to prevent it.»

He acted accordingly that evening, but suffered most cruelly in the task of disguising his sense of internal pain. A singular contrast it was betwixt the state of the actor and the fictitious character which he represented; Molière was disguising his real and, as it proved, his dying agonies, in order to give utterance and interest to the feigned or fancied complaints of *Le Malade Imaginaire*, and repressing the voice of mortal sufferance to affect that of an imaginary hypochondriac. At length on arriving at the concluding interlude, in which, assenting to the oath administered to him as the candidate for medical honours, in the mock ceremonial, by which he engages to administer the remedies prescribed by the ancients whether right or wrong, and never to use any other than those approved by the college—

Maladus dûit-il crevare,
Et mori de suo malo,

as Molière, in the character of Argan, replied *Juro*, the faculty had a full and fatal revenge. The wheel was broken at the cistern—he had fallen into a convulsive fit. The entertainment was hurried to a conclusion, and Molière

was carried home. His cough returned with violence, and he was found to have burst a blood-vessel. A priest was sent for, and two scrupulous ecclesiastics of Saint Eustace's parish distinguished themselves by refusing to administer the last consolations to a player and the author of *Tartuffe*. A third of better principles came too late; Molière was insensible, and choked by the quantity of blood which he could not discharge. Two poor Sisters of Charity, who had often experienced his bounty, supported him as he expired.

Bigotry persecuted to the grave the lifeless reliques of the man of genius. Harlai, Archbishop of Paris, who himself died of the consequences of a course of continued debauchery, thought it necessary to show himself as intolerantly strict in form as he was licentious in practice. He forbade the burial of a comedian's remains. Madame Molière went to throw herself at the feet of Louis XIV; but with impolitic temerity her petition stated, that if her deceased husband had been criminal in composing and acting dramatic pieces, his Majesty, at whose command and for whose amusement he had done so, must be criminal also. This argument, though in itself unanswerable, was too bluntly stated to be favourably received; Louis dismissed the suppliant with the indifferent answer, that the matter depended on the Archbishop of Paris. The

King, however, sent private orders to Harlai to revoke the interdict against the decent burial of the man, whose talents, during his life-time, his Majesty had delighted to honour. The funeral took place accordingly, but, like that of Ophelia, "with maimed rites." The curate of Saint Eustace had directions not to give his attendance, and the corpse was transported from his place of residence, and taken to the burial-ground, without being, as usual, presented at the parish-church. This was not all. A large assemblage of the lower classes seemed to threaten an interruption of the funeral ceremony. But their fanaticism was not proof against a thousand francs which the widow of Molière dispersed among them from the windows, thus purchasing for the remains of her husband an uninterrupted passage to their last abode.

In these latter proceedings all readers will recognize the bigotry of the time. If in the peculiar circumstances in which Molière died, while personating a ridiculous character, and affecting an imaginary disease, there are precisians, even in the present day, who may be disposed to regard this catastrophe as a special manifestation of the divine displeasure, we would remind them, first, of the passage in the Gospel of St Mark, chapter xiii, verse 2, etc. strongly discountenancing such deductions. Secondly, we would observe, that the benevo-

lent motive expressed by Molière for acting upon that occasion could not be other than sincere, since bodily malady of the severe nature under which he laboured must have silenced personal vanity, or any less powerful reason than the one alleged. Lastly, we may add, that if it be in any circumstances lawful to correct vice and folly by ridicule, and by an appeal to the feelings of the ludicrous which make part of our nature, the exposure of the selfish folly of the *Malade Imaginaire*, and of the ignorance as well as covetousness of those who assume the robe of knowledge without either knowledge or probity, must be a lawful and a useful employment.

We have now finished with Molière's public life, which was, in many respects, one of the most triumphant, and even apparently the most happy, that a man of genius could well propose to himself. From the time he returned to Paris in 1658, till 1673 when he died, fifteen years of continued triumph had attended his literary career; and, wonderful to tell, notwithstanding the proverbial fickleness of courts and of popular audiences, Molière never for a moment appears to have lost ground in their high opinion. His most insipid pieces, such as *Mélicerte* and the like, incurred no disapprobation, they served their purpose, and were so far applauded; while those in which his own vein of wit and humour was displayed,

were, in every instance, welcomed with shouts of applause at their first representation, or with universal approbation after a short interval of doubt, which must have rendered it still more flattering ; like favours won from a mistress who would have refused them if she could. These were years, indeed, not of peace,—for Molière was surrounded by enemies,—but years of victorious war with enemies whom he despised, defied, and conquered. Nor were they years of ease and indolence, but a far more happy period of successful exertion. His reputation was unbounded, and his praise the theme of every tongue, from that of the Grand Monarque himself, to the meanest of his subjects.

Other men of genius have been victims to poverty and difficulties. But of these Molière knew nothing. His income, arising from his profits as manager, actor, and author, was extremely considerable, and, together with his pension, amounted to a sum amply sufficient for every purpose, whether of necessity or elegance. He was, in fact, an opulent man. This good fortune was well bestowed, for he was indefatigable in acts of charity. He sought out objects for his liberality amongst sufferers of a more modest description, and was lavish of his alms, less justifiably perhaps, to the poor whom he met in the streets. It is well remembered how, on one of these occasions,

“ O! O! ”

“ O! O! ” “ O! O! ” “ O! O! ” “ O! O! ”

having given a piece of money to a beggar as he ascended his carriage, he was surprised to see the man come hallooing and panting after him, to tell him he had made a mistake, in giving him a piece of gold in place of some less valuable coin. «Keep the money, my friend, and accept this other piece,» said Molière; «*Où la vertu va-t-elle se nicher?*» The action, as M. Taschereau says truly, shows Molière's benevolence, and the exclamation, in finding an expression so happy for such just wonder, marks his genius.

The private circle of Molière embraced the most distinguished men of the age. La Fontaine, Boileau, the joyous Chapelle, Racine, and other names of distinction in that Augustan age of French literature, formed the society in which he commonly enjoyed his hours of leisure, and in which literature, taste, and conviviality were happily blended. Many of the nobility had taste enough to waive the difference of rank and to chuse Molière for a companion. «Come to me at any hour you please,» said the great Prince de Condé to our author; «you have but to announce your name by a valet-de-chambre; your visit can never be ill-timed.»

When aristocratic pride, or more frequently private malice and wounded self-conceit, assuming the pretext of difference of rank, endeavoured to put an affront upon Molière, he

usually received instant indemnification from some noblemen of better taste. Thus when the other valets-de-chambre of the royal household showed an unwillingness to assist Molière in the discharge of his office, Monsieur de Bellocq, a man of genius as well as rank, rebuked them by saying aloud to the object of their paltry spite—"Permit *me* to assist you in making the King's bed, Monsieur de Molière—I shall esteem myself honoured in having you for a companion."

Louis XIV, as we have already observed, was the constant and firm supporter of Molière. When assailed by a horrible calumny, which we will presently notice, the King showed his total disbelief by becoming godfather to one of his children. In fact, to his own great honour, he spared no opportunity of showing favour to a man whose genius he was fortunately able to appreciate. The following is a remarkable instance, occurring in the Memoirs of Madame Campan.

All the world has heard of the hearty appetite of the Grand Monarque. The liberal means which he took to appease his hunger at meal-times not appearing uniformly sufficient to parry its attacks, the King introduced a general custom, that there should be a cold fowl, or some such trifle, kept in constant readiness *en cas de nuit*—in case that his Majesty should awake hungry. The King had been informed

that the officers of his household had refused to admit Molière to the table provided for them, under pretence of the inequality of his condition. He took an opportunity to correct this folly. « Molière, » said he, « I am told you make bad cheer here, and I myself feel something of an appetite. Let them serve up my *en cas de nuit*. » He then caused Molière to sit down, cut up the fowl, and helping his valet-de-chambre, proceeded to breakfast along with him. It was at the King's levee, so that the noblest about the court saw the society in which it pleased his Majesty to eat his meals; and it may be well believed there was no objection in future to the introduction of Molière to the table of service, as it was termed.

Yet Molière had his cares and vexations; and the doom of man, born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, was not reversed for this distinguished author. The plague and vexation arising from quarrels amongst his players, led him to exclaim, in « *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, » — « What a troublesome task to manage a company of players! » To a young man, also, who wished to embrace the profession of an actor, and really had some talents for it, he painted his own art in the most degrading colours; described its followers as compelled to procure the countenance of the great and powerful by the most disagreeable condescensions, and conjured him to follow

out the law, for which his father had destined him, and to renounce all thoughts of the stage. There is room to believe that Molière's temper was so impatient, quick, and irritable, as to make him unusually sensible of the plagues and disappointments incidental to the situation of a manager. He was sensitively alive to the mispronunciation of his own verses; and the anecdote which M. Taschereau gives us as to his extreme agony on this subject, induces us to give credit to what is told of his impatience at any occasional want of punctuality, or accidental derangement of the business of the scene.

But Molière's greatest source of unhappiness arose from his marriage; and upon this subject, the license of his younger years became the means of subjecting him to the most cruel calumnies in his more advanced life.

During the time that Molière was travelling about in the provinces, he formed a connection with an actress of his company, named Madelaine Bejart. This lady had been previously a favourite of the Count de Modene, by whom, in 1638, she had born a daughter, named Françoise, who is supposed to have died soon afterwards. After the amour of Madelaine Bejart and Molière had terminated, our author, in 1661, married another Bejart, whose Christian name was Armande, and who, according to M. Taschereau, was the sister of

his mistress Madelaine. In this connection there is something disgusting, and which the laws of some countries even regard as criminal. But a much more foul accusation was framed upon it. One Montfleuri, the favourite performer of a troop of comedians, called of « l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, » who were the rivals of that of Molière, extracted out of the above circumstance a most horrible and unnatural accusation, which he had the audacity to put into the form of a petition to his Majesty. According to this atrocious libel, Armande Bejart was not the sister of Molière's former mistress Madelaine, but her daughter, and the fruits of her communication with Molière himself; thus confusing her with Françoise, daughter of the Count de Modene, the fact of whose birth seemed to give some credit to the horrible assertion.

Such is the account, given by M. Taschereau, of the real family of Molière's wife. According to another hypothesis, detailed in three letters published as a supplement to the last edition of Molière's works, Armande Bejart was not the sister, but actually the daughter of Madelaine Bejart and of the Count de Modene. Under this supposition, Molière married the child of his former mistress. The subject is disgusting, and the evidence on either side very imperfect. Undoubtedly it underwent some examination at the time; for

the king refused all credit to the odious imputation of Montfleuri, and, as we elsewhere hinted, showed his total incredulity on the subject, by condescending, along with the Duchess of Orleans, to stand godfather to Molière's first child,—the best refutation, certainly, which could be given to the calumny.

But this marriage was in every respect imprudent and inauspicious, and laid the foundation of his principal misfortunes. His wife was gay, beautiful, and coquettish in the extreme; yet he was not able to forbear loving her with an attachment which was neither deserved nor returned. She disgraced him repeatedly by her intrigues during his lifetime, and her scandalous adventures after his death were dishonourable to his memory. The honest men whom his satire had ridiculed on account of domestic distresses of the same nature, had no doubt some feeling of internal satisfaction, when they found that the author of the « *Cocu Imaginaire* » shared the same apprehensions with his hero, without having the slightest reason to doubt, in his own instance, of their being founded in reality.

Leaving the consideration of his private life, chequered as it was by favourable and painful circumstances, we willingly take some general view of the character of Molière as an author, in which we feel it our duty to vindicate for him the very highest place of any who has

ever distinguished himself in his department of literature. His natural disposition, his personal habits, his vivacity as a Frenchman, the depth of his knowledge of human nature, his command of a language eminent above all others for the power of expressing ludicrous images and ideas, raise him to the highest point of eminence amongst the authors of his own country and class, and assure him an easy superiority over those of every other country.

Our countrymen will perhaps ask, if we have forgotten the inimitable comic powers of our own Shakspeare. The sense of humour displayed by that extraordinary man is perhaps as remarkable as his powers of searching the human bosom for other and deeper purposes. But if Johnson has rightly defined comedy to be « a dramatic representation of the lighter faults of mankind, with a view to make folly and vice ridiculous, » it would be difficult to show that Shakspeare has dedicated to such purposes more than occasional and scattered scenes, dispersed through his numerous dramas. The « Merry Wives of Windsor » is perhaps the piece most resembling a regular comedy, yet the poetry with which it abounds is of a tone, which soars, in many respects, beyond its sphere. In most of his other compositions, his comic humour is rather an ingredient of the drama, than the point to which it is emphatically and specially directed. The

scenes of Falstaff are but introduced to relieve and garnish the historical chronicle which he desired to bring on the stage. In the characters of Falconbridge and Hotspur, their peculiar humour gilds the stern features of high and lofty chivalry: in the « Tempest, » the comic touches shine upon and soften the extravagance of beautiful poetry and romantic fiction. These plays may be something higher and better, but they are not comedies dedicated to expose the vices and follies of mankind, though containing in them much that tends to that purpose. It must also be remembered, that the manners in Shakspeare (so far as his comedy depends on them) are so antiquated, that but for the deep and universal admiration with which England regards her immortal bard, and the pious care with which his works have been explained and commented upon, the follies arising out of the fashions of his time would be entirely obsolete. We enjoy such characters as Don Armado, and even Malvolio, as we would do the pictures of Vandyke in a gallery; not that they resemble in their exterior any thing we have ever seen or could have imagined, until the excellence of the painter presented them before us, and made us own that they must have been drawn from originals, now forgotten.

The scenes of Molière, however, are painted from subjects with which our own times are

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acquainted; they represent follies of a former date indeed, but which have their resemblances in the present day. Some old-fashioned habits being allowed for, the personages of his drama resemble the present generation as much as our grandmothers' portraits, but for hoop petticoats and commodes, resemble their descendants of the present generation. Our physicians no longer wear robes of office, or ride upon mules, but we cannot flatter ourselves that the march of intellect, as the cant phrase goes, has exploded either the "Malade Imaginaire," or the race of grave deceivers who fattened on his folly. If, again, we look at Molière's object in all the numerous pieces which his fertile genius produced, we perceive a constant, sustained, and determined warfare against vice and folly,—sustained by means of wit and satire, without any assistance derived either from sublimity or pathos. It signified little to Molière what was the mere form which his drama assumed: whether regular comedy or *comédie-ballet*; whether his art worked in its regular sphere, or was pressed by fashion into the service of mummary and pantomime, its excellence was the same,—if but one phrase was uttered, that phrase was comic. Instead of sinking down to the farcical subjects which he adopted, whether by command of the king, or to sacrifice to the popular taste, Molière elevated these subjects by his treatment of

them. His pen, like the hand of Midas, turned all it touched to gold; or rather, his mode of treating the most ordinary subject gave it a value such as the sculptor or engraver can confer upon clay, rock, old copper, or even cherry-stones.

It is not a little praise to this great author, that he derived none of his powers of amusement from the coarse and mean sources to which the British dramatic poets had such liberal recourse. This might, and probably did, flow in part from the good taste of the poet himself, but it was also much owing to that of Louis XIV. Whatever the private conduct of that prince, of which enough may be learned from the scandalous chronicle of the times, he knew too well *son métier de roi*, and what was due to his dignity in public, to make common jest with his subjects at any thing offensive to good morals or decorum. Charles II, on the other hand,—

A merry monarch, scandalous and poor,—

had been too long emancipated by his exile from all regal ceremonial, to lay his sense of humour under any restraints of delicacy. He enjoyed a broad jest, as he would have done an extra bottle of wine, without being careful about the persons who participated with him in either; and hence a personal laxity of con-

duct which scandalized the feelings of Evelyn, and a neglect of decency in public entertainments, encouraged by the presence of the sovereign, which called down the indignation of Collier. Some comparatively trifling slips, with which the critics of the period charge Molière, form no exception to the general decorum of his writings.

Looking at their general purpose and tendency, we must be convinced that there is no comic author, of ancient or modern times, who directed his satire against such a variety of vices and follies, which, if he could not altogether extirpate, he failed not at all events to drive out of the shape and form which they had assumed.

The absurdities of *L'Étourdi*, the ridiculous jargon of the *Précieuses*, the silly quarrels of the lovers in the *Dépit Amoureux*, the absurd jealousy of husbands in *L'École des Maris*, the varied fopperies and affectations of men of fashion in *Les Fâcheux*, the picture of hypocrisy in the *Tartuffe*, the exhibition at once of bizarre and untractable virtue and of the depravity of dissimulation in the *Misanthrope*, the effects of the dangers of misassorted alliances in *George Dandin*, of the tricks of domestics in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, of the pedantic affectation of learning in *Les Femmes Savantes*, of the dupes who take physic and the knaves who administer it in the *Malade Ima-*

ginaire,—all these, with similar aberrations, exposed and exploded by the pen of a single author, showed that Molière possessed, in a degree superior to all other men, the falcon's piercing eye to detect vice under every veil, or folly in every shape, and the talons with which to pounce upon either, as the natural prey of the satirist. No other writer of comedy ever soared through flights so many and so various.

We have said that the comedy of Molière never exhibits any touch of the sublime; and from its not being attempted in those more serious pieces, as *Don Garcie* and *Mélicerte*, where a high strain of poetry might have been struck to advantage, we conceive that Molière did not possess that road to the human bosom. One passage alone strikes us as approaching to a very lofty tone. *Don Juan*, distinguished solely by the desperation of his courage, enters the tomb of the Commander, and ridicules the fears of his servant, when he tells him that the statue has nodded in answer to the invitation delivered to him by his master's command. *Don Juan* delivers the same invitation in person, and the statue again bends his head. Feeling a touch of the supernatural terror to which his lofty courage refuses to give way, his sole observation is, "*Allons, sortons d'ici.*" A retreat, neither alarmed nor precipitated, is all which he will allow to the terrors of such a prodigy.

In like manner, although we are informed that Molière possessed feelings of sensibility too irritable for his own happiness in private life, his writings indicate no command of the pathetic. His lovers are always gallant and witty, but never tender or ardent. This is the case, not only where the love intrigue is only a means of carrying on the business of the scene, but in *Le Dépit Amoureux*, where the ardour of affection might have gracefully mingled with the tracasseries of the lovers' quarrels; and in *Psyché*, in which it is to be supposed the author would have introduced the passionate and pathetic, if he had possessed the power of painting it. Nor do any of his personages, in all the distresses in which the scene places them, ever make a strong impression on the feelings of the audience, who are only amused by the ludicrous situations to which the distresses give rise. The detected villany of *Tartuffe* affects the feelings indeed strongly, but it is more from the gratification of honest resentment against a detected miscreant, than from any interest we take in the fortunes of the duped Orgon.

Neither did Molière ornament his dramatic pieces with poetical imagery, whether descriptive or moral. His mode of writing excluded the « morning sun, and all about gilding the eastern horizon.» He wrote to the understanding, and not to the fancy; and was pro-

bably aware moreover that such poetical ornaments, however elegant when under the direction of good taste, are apt to glide into the opposite extreme, and to lead to that which Molière regarded as the greatest fault in composition, an affectation of finery approaching to the language of the *Précieuses Ridicules*. Alceste, in *Le Misanthrope*, expresses the opinion of the author on this subject:—

Ce style figuré, dont on fait vanité,
Sort de bon caractère, et de la vérité:
Ce n'est que jeu de mots, qu'affectation pure,
Et ce n'est point ainsi que parle la nature.
Le méchant goût du siècle en cela me fait peur,
Nos pères tout grossiers l'avoient beaucoup meilleur.

In what, therefore, it may be asked, consisted the excellence of this entertaining writer, whose works, as often as we have opened a volume during the composition of this slight article, we have found it impossible to lay out of our hand until we had completed a scene, however little to our immediate purpose of consulting it? If Molière did not possess, or at least has not exercised the powers of the sublime, the pathetic, or the imaginative in poetry, from whence do his works derive their undisputed and almost universal power of charming? We reply, from their truth and from their simplicity; from the powerful and penetrating view of human nature, which could

strip folly and vice of all their disguise, and expose them to laughter and scorn when they most hoped for honour and respect ; also from the extreme *naïveté* as well as force of the expressions which effect the author's purpose. A father consults his friends about the deep melancholy into which his daughter is fallen : one advises to procure for her a handsome piece of plate, beautifully sculptured, as an object which cannot fail to give pleasure to the most disconsolate mind. The celebrated answer, *vous êtes orfèvre, Monsieur Josse*, at once unmasks the private views of the selfish adviser, and has afforded a measure by which all men, from Molière's time to our own, may judge of the disinterested character of such friendly counsels. This short, dry, sudden and unexpected humour of Molière, seconded as it always is by the soundest good sense, is one great proof of his knowledge of his art. The tragic may be greatly enlivened by some previous preparation, as the advance of a mighty host with its ensigns displayed has, even at a distance, an effect upon the nerves of those whom it is about to assail. But wit is most successful when it bursts from an unexpected ambush, and carries its point by surprise. The best jest will lose its effect on the stage, if so much preparation is employed as leads the spectator to anticipate what is coming, as it will suffer in society if introduced with

the preface of « I'll tell you a good thing ! » In this species of surprise Molière surpasses every writer of comedy, but the jest at which you laugh springs as naturally out of the subject, as if it had been obvious to your apprehension from the very commencement of the scene. A brief sentence, a word, even an exclamation, is often sufficient to produce the full effect of the ludicrous, as a spark will spring a mine, in the place and time when the explosion is least expected. The most unexpected means in the hands of this great artist are also the most certain; and you are first made sensible of what he has aimed at, when you admire his arrow quivering in the centre of the mark.

The depth and force of Molière's common sense is equally remarkable in displaying his own just and sound opinions, as in exposing the false taste and affectation of others. Ariste, Philinte, and the other personages of his drama, to whom (as the ancients did to their choruses) he has ascribed the task of moralizing upon the subject of the scene, and expressing the sentiments which must be supposed those of the author himself, have all the firmness, strength, and simplicity proper to the enunciation of truth and wisdom; and much more of both will be found within the precincts of Molière's works, than in the formal lessons of men of less acute capacity.

Molière himself knew the force and value

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of his simplicity, although sometimes objected to by fastidious critics as hurrying him into occasional vulgarity. In order that he might not depart from it, he adopted the well-known practice of reading his pieces while in manuscript to his housekeeper, La Foret, and observing the effect they produced on so plain, but shrewd and sensible a mind, before bringing them on the stage. The habit of being called into consultations of this kind had given the good dame such an accurate tact, that it was in vain that Molière tried to pass upon her the composition of another poet for his own. The circumstance proves how well she deserved to sit in the chair of censorship which her master had assigned her. M. Taschereau thinks that the opinion of La Foret was only demanded by Molière upon low and farcical subjects. But though we allow that some parts of his higher comedy might be above her sphere, we can easily conceive that the author might have an interest in knowing exactly how much his housekeeper,—at once an exact and favourable specimen of a great majority of his audiences,—might be able to comprehend of his higher comedy, and in what particulars it was elevated beyond the line of her understanding. Nor is it unreasonable to conceive, that an author who desired above all other things to be generally understood, should have paused on the passages which La Foret com-

prehended less perfectly, and omitted or explained what was like to prove *caviar* to the multitude. It would not be perhaps unnatural to suppose, that to the shrewd, frank, acute, and penetrating character of Molière's house-keeper we owe the original idea of those clever and faithful, but caustic and satirical female domestics, the Toinettes and Nicoles, whom he has produced on the stage with so much effect.

Some readers may be disappointed, that after pronouncing Molière the prince of the writers of comedy, we should have limited the talents by which he attained such pre-eminence, to the possession of common sense, however sound, of observation, however acute, and of expression, however forcible, true, and simple. It is not, however, by talents of a different class from those enjoyed by the rest of humanity that the ingredients which form great men are constituted. On the contrary, such peculiar tastes and talents only produce singularity. The real source of greatness in almost every department is an extraordinary proportion of some distinguishing quality proper to all mankind, and of which therefore all mankind, less or more, comprehends the character and the value. A man with four arms would be a monster for romance or for a show; it is the individual that can best make use of the ordinary conformation of his body, who obtains a

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superiority over his fellow-creatures by strength or agility. In a word, the general qualities of sound judgment, clear views, and powerful expression of what is distinctly perceived, acquire the same value, as they rise in degree above the general capacity of humanity, with that obtained by diamonds, which in proportion to their weight in carats become almost inestimable, while the smaller sparks of the same precious substance are of ordinary occurrence, and held comparatively in slight esteem.

THE END.

Scott, Walter,

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